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the bible as your friend

**a guide
for
lesbians
&
gays**

WHAT ARE THE FACTS?

Many gays and lesbians either assume or have been flatly told that the Bible condemns them. They often feel that they have no place in the church, preferring not to waste time with a weapon which has been used against them. What are the facts?

▼ Although some churches and clergy have condemned homosexuals, an increasing number of expert scholars now recognize that the Bible does not provide the basis for such judgement. Learn the facts. Ignorance is your greatest enemy. New information will bring you new freedom. Jesus said, "... the truth will set you free."

▼ The few Bible verses that are used to condemn lesbians and gays have been distorted, mistranslated, or incorrectly interpreted, resulting in hurt to people against whom the original text was not directed. The Bible never says that homosexuality is a sin. The Bible never discusses sexual orientation.

▼ There is no word for "homosexual" in the original Greek or Hebrew of the Bible. The word, "homosexual," is late and came into common use only in the past one hundred years.

▼ The most common Greek word for romantic love is *eros*, which is not used at all in the New Testament.

▼ Jesus never mentioned or condemned romantic love or sexual relationships between people of the same sex. Yet Jesus taught frequently about love between people of the same sex.

▼ The Bible regularly teaches and commends love between people of the same sex. David and Jonathan, Ruth and Naomi, Jesus and the beloved disciple, and Paul and Timothy are Bible examples of profound and deep love between people of the same sex.

▼ Jesus said, "By this everyone will know you are my disciples if you love each other." Since God loves us, we ought also to love ourselves and each other. This is the message of hope to you from God's Word in the Bible.

THE BIBLE AS YOUR FRIEND

The Bible is not the enemy of lesbians and gays! How is the Bible your friend? Begin with the greatest letter of love ever written from God:

▼ *John 3:16–17*

"For God so loved the world that God gave God's only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Jesus should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send Jesus into the world to judge (condemn) the world; but that the world should be saved through Jesus."

You are "whoever." God loves you and offers you new life in Christ. Anyone who condemns or judges you is ignoring or misusing the Bible. Jesus offers you abundant life!

▼ *John 10:10*

"The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that you might have life, and might have it abundantly."

The "thief" is Jesus' reference to judgmental and insensitive religious leaders of the time. These leaders in their pride and greed actually kept people away from God instead of giving love and hope to the downtrodden and outcast. This contrast between Jesus and "religion" is not by accident. You may have suffered from condemning and insensitive religion. Don't let that keep you from Jesus Christ. God's love is unconditional and impartial. God's love includes you!

▼ *Acts 10:34–35*

"Peter said, 'I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but among every people the person who respects God and does right is welcome to God.'"

If you read Acts 10 and Acts 15, you will discover stories which describe God's acceptance on the basis of faith, not the observance of religious laws. Here God accepts people that some religious leaders wanted to reject. The truth of these verses is very simple and powerful: *God loves you and desires to be in permanent relationship with you.*

THE POWER OF GOD'S LOVE

Whoever you are, whatever your life's circumstances may be, it is important for you to know that Jesus Christ died to take away your sins, not your sexuality. Christ accepts you as you are.

▼ *Ephesians 2:8-9*

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and not of yourselves. It is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast."

Everyone needs God's grace; "grace" means unmerited favor, an unearned gift. No one can earn or deserve God's love which *already* is given to all people.

▼ *Romans 3:22-24*

"The righteousness of God is given through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by God's grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. . . ."

"Sin," in New Testament Greek, means literally "to miss the target." It is a failure to fulfill God's plan for us: love and justice in all human relationships; and union and fellowship with God. Sin is separation from God; a broken relationship producing separation, hatred, and injustice in our human relationships.

▼ *Romans 5:7-8*

"For one will hardly die for a righteous person; though perhaps for a good person someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates God's own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Love is the healer of sin, and forgiveness is the act that brings such healing. The ultimate act of love is expressed by Jesus who died on the cross; through the mystery of the cross our sins are forgiven. This is God's free gift!

▼ *Romans 6:23*

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Sovereign."

Sin causes misery and spiritual death, but God freely gives life. God loves you and waits for you to receive the gift of new life and hope in Jesus Christ.

GOD OFFERS YOU A GIFT

When God enters your life through Jesus Christ, you receive everything God has to offer. God's gift of new life in Christ empowers you to love yourself. You can feel good about yourself because of God's love.

▼ *Romans 5:1*

"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Sovereign Jesus Christ."

You feel good about yourself because your sins are forgiven and you have peace with God.

▼ *Romans 5:5*

"The love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

You feel good about yourself because the love Christ places in your heart will improve your relationships with other people.

▼ *II Corinthians 5:17*

"Anyone in Christ is a new creation. Old things have passed away. Behold, new has come."

You feel good about yourself because in Christ you have a new beginning in life.

▼ *I Peter 1:3*

"God. . . has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

You feel good about yourself because in Christ you have hope.

▼ *Philippians 4:19*

"My God shall supply all your needs according to God's riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

You feel good about yourself because in Christ you have all that you need.

▼ *Colossians 1:17*

"Christ is before all things, and in Christ all things hold together."

You feel good about yourself because all of life is made whole in Christ.

WHY TURN TO JESUS CHRIST?

Jesus understands you: your feelings, your needs, and your lifestyle. Jesus never condemned same-sex love, but often confronted unloving, hurtful acts as sinful, missing the mark of God's plan for justice in human relationships.

▼ *Hebrews 4:14–16*

"Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our human limitations, but one who has been tested (tempted) in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace to help in the time of need."

The word "tested" or "tempted" used in Hebrews 4:15 to describe Jesus means to be "tested by personal experience." The earthly experiences of Jesus included acceptance of people with very diverse lifestyles who were often condemned or rejected by the religious leaders. Jesus fully understands every human condition and circumstance.

▼ *John 14:6*

"Jesus said, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to God, my Parent, but through me.'"

Turning to Jesus is the first step in becoming a disciple, a believer, a follower of Jesus Christ. "Turn" is the literal meaning of the word, "repent," in both the Hebrew and Greek languages of the Bible. This means turning from destructive and limiting attitudes and actions to the new life of love, joy, peace, and hope that God offers you in Jesus Christ.

▼ *I John 5:11–12*

"And the witness is this: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in Jesus Christ. Whoever has Jesus Christ has the life; whoever does not have Jesus Christ does not have the life."

Eternal life is the ultimate promise of God to you. An abundant life filled with meaning and purpose begins with your decision to follow Christ.



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HOW CAN I TURN TO JESUS?

Begin by admitting that you need Jesus Christ and are willing to turn to Jesus for help. Then, ask Christ to come into your life and fulfill God's plan for you.

▼ *Romans 10:9-13*

"If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Sovereign, and believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth one confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes in God will not be disappointed.' (For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same God is ruler of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon God. For 'whoever will call upon the name of God will be saved.'"

Express your belief in Jesus and your desire to follow Christ with a simple prayer. Do your part; God always does God's part!

▼ *II Corinthians 6:2*

"Behold, now is the 'acceptable time,' behold, now is 'the day of salvation.'"

Do it now. This is the most important decision you will ever make.

Simply pray this prayer, or use other words that may be more comfortable for you:

A PRAYER

*Dear God,
I admit that I need your love and forgiveness. I am willing to turn to you now. I confess Jesus as the ruler of my life, and I accept Jesus as my Saviour. Guide me and help me to become what you want me to be. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

WHAT NEXT?

So you have prayed and asked Jesus to come into your life and take control. What do you do next? Several steps will help you build on this decision.

Share Your Experience

Tell your roommate, your best friend, your lover, your family, or whoever is most significant to you. "Coming out" as a follower of Jesus is important to your spiritual growth. Write down the experience you just had of realizing your need of Jesus and turning to Christ as ruler and saviour of your life. This will help you to remember this experience and share it with others.

Find Other Gay & Lesbian Christians

Finding supportive people who accept you as a gay or lesbian Christian is one of the most important steps in your spiritual growth. You can find gay and lesbian Christians by calling the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) closest to your area. MCC is listed in local telephone directories. You can also contact the MCC headquarters for information; the address is printed on this pamphlet.

There are also groups of gay and lesbian Christians in various other Christian denominations; a list of these is also available from the MCC headquarters address.

Pray, and Study the Bible

Whether or not you become involved in a local MCC, you can begin to study the Bible. You and your partner or interested friends can meet regularly to pray, study the Bible, and support each other in Christian fellowship.

Bible study courses often are available at local Metropolitan Community Churches. Correspondence courses and other Bible study helps are available from the MCC headquarters address.

HELP WITH IMPORTANT ISSUES

Your decision to follow Jesus is just the beginning of a journey of faith with many opportunities for spiritual growth.

▼ *Romans 10:17*

"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

Becoming more familiar with the Bible as your friend will provide encouragement and strength for your continuing growth.

Assurance of Your Life in Christ

The most thorough statement of New Testament assurance in Christ is found in Romans 5–8. You will also find great assurance in the Gospel of John, especially chapter 14. The following verses are helpful: John 5:24; I John 4:13; Romans 8:16 and 10:13. The epistles of I Peter and I John are both filled with encouragement to believers under pressure.

Homosexuality & the Bible

Six brief passages of the Bible have been most used against gays and lesbians: Genesis 19:5; Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13; Romans 1:26–27; I Corinthians 6:9; and I Timothy 1:10. All six must be taken out of their true context when directed against lesbians and gays.

A thorough, yet concise, commentary on each of these passages is provided in another pamphlet of this series, *Not a Sin, Not a Sickness: What the Bible Does and Does Not Say*, which includes a helpful list of study resources on the Bible and homosexuality.

The Inclusive Gospel for Everybody

The Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts form a two-volume account of the progress of Jesus' message across all cultural, racial, geographical, religious, sexual, and political barriers. Careful study of these two New Testament books will take disciplined time and effort. Becoming thoroughly informed and equipped to explain the inclusive nature of the gospel is essential for gay and lesbian Christians.



METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH

Calling people to new life
through the liberating
Gospel of Jesus Christ . . .

Confronting the injustice
of poverty, sexism, racism,
and homophobia through
Christian social action . . .

Creating a community
of healing and reconciliation
through faith, hope, and love.

FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

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The translation and/or paraphrase of Scripture quoted is the Rev. Dr. Truluck's.

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not a sin
not a sickness

what the bible
does
&
does not
say

HOMOSEXUALITY & THE CHURCH

The most beautiful word in the Gospel of Jesus Christ is "whosoever." All of God's promises are intended for every human being. This includes gay men and lesbians. How tragic it is that the Christian Church has excluded and persecuted people who are homosexual!

We are all created with powerful needs for personal relationships. Our quality of life depends upon the love we share with others, whether family or friends, partners or peers. Yet, lesbians and gay men facing hostile attitudes in society often are denied access to healthy relationships. Jesus Christ calls us to find ultimate meaning in life through a personal relationship with our Creator. This important spiritual union can bring healing and strength to all of our human relationships.

Not a Sin, Not a Sickness

For many centuries, the Christian Church's attitude toward human sexuality was very negative: sex was for procreation, not for pleasure; women and slaves were considered property to be owned by males; and many expressions of heterosexuality, like homosexuality, were considered sinful. Such tradition often continues to influence churches today. Many teach that women should be subordinate to men, continue to permit forms of discrimination against peoples of color, and condemn homosexuals. They say that all homosexual acts are sinful, often referring to their interpretation of scripture.

Other churches today are influenced by a century of psychoanalytic thought promoted through a powerful minority in the field of medicine. They see homosexuality as some kind of sickness. Although this view has now been soundly discredited by the medical profession, some churches and clergy continue to be influenced by the idea. They say that homosexuals are "imperfect" and in need of "healing."

The good news is that, since 1968, when Metropolitan Community Church was founded, the emergence of a strong lesbian and gay community, and the conclusions of new scientific studies on homosexuality have forced the Christian Church to reexamine these issues. A growing number of biblical and theological scholars now recognize that Scripture does not condemn loving, responsible homosexual relationships. Therefore, gay men and lesbians should be accepted—just as they are—in Christian churches, and homosexual relationships should be celebrated and affirmed!

ABOUT THE BIBLE

The Bible is a collection of writings which span more than a thousand years recounting the history of God's relationship with the Hebrew and Christian people. It was written in several languages, embraces many literary forms, and reflects cultures very different from our own. These are important considerations for properly understanding the Bible in its context.

There are vast differences in doctrines between various Christian denominations, all of which use the same Bible. Such differences have led some Christians to claim that other Christians are not really Christians at all! Biblical interpretation and theology differ from church to church.

Biblical interpretation and theology also change from time to time. Approximately 150 years ago in the United States, some Christian teaching held that there was a two-fold moral order: black and white. Whites were thought to be superior to blacks, therefore blacks were to be subservient and slavery was an institution ordained by God. Clergy who supported such an abhorrent idea claimed the authority of the Bible. The conflict over slavery led to divisions which gave birth to some major Christian denominations. These same denominations, of course, do not support slavery today. Did the Bible change? No, their *interpretation* of the Bible did!

New Information Refutes Old Ideas

What influences lead us to new ways of understanding Scripture? New scientific information, social changes, and personal experience are perhaps the greatest forces for change in the way we interpret the Bible and develop our beliefs. Scientific awareness of homosexual orientation did not exist until the nineteenth century.

Most Christian churches, including Metropolitan Community Church, believe the Bible was inspired by God and provides a key source of authority for the Christian faith. Therefore, what the Bible teaches on any subject, including sexuality, is of great significance. The problem, however, is that sometimes the Bible says very little about some subjects; and popular attitudes about those matters are determined much more by other sources, which are then read into the biblical statements. This has been particularly true of homosexuality. But fortunately, recent scholarship refutes many previous assumptions and conclusions.

GENESIS 19:1–25

What was the sin of Sodom? Some “televangelists” carelessly proclaim that God destroyed the ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of “homosexuality.” Although some theologians have equated the sin of Sodom with homosexuality, a careful look at Scripture corrects such ignorance.

Announcing judgment on these cities in Genesis 18, God sends two angels to Sodom, where Abraham’s nephew, Lot, persuades them to stay in his home. Genesis 19 records that “all the people from every quarter” surround Lot’s house demanding the release of his visitors so “we might know them.” The Hebrew word for “know” in this case, *yadha*, usually means “have thorough knowledge of.” It could also express intent to examine the visitors’ credentials, or on rare occasions the term implies sexual intercourse. If the latter was the author’s intended meaning, it would have been a clear case of attempted gang rape.

Horried at this gross violation of ancient hospitality rules, Lot attempts to protect the visitors by offering his two daughters to the angry crowd, a morally outrageous act by today’s standards. The people of Sodom refuse, so the angels render them blind. Lot and his family are then rescued by the angels as the cities are destroyed.

Several observations are important. First, the judgment on these cities for their wickedness had been announced prior to the alleged homosexual incident. Second, *all* of Sodom’s people participated in the assault on Lot’s house; in no culture has more than a small minority of the population been homosexual. Third, Lot’s offer to release his daughters suggests he knew his neighbors to have heterosexual interests. Fourth, if the issue was sexual, why did God spare Lot, who immediately commits incest with his daughters? Most importantly, why do all the other passages of Scripture referring to this account fail to raise the issue of homosexuality?

What was the Sin of Sodom?

Ezekiel 16:48–50 states it clearly: people of Sodom, like many people today, had abundance of material goods. But they failed to meet the needs of the poor, and they worshipped idols.

The sins of injustice and idolatry plague every generation. We stand under the same judgment if we create false gods or treat others with injustice.

LEVITICUS 18:22 & 20:13

Christians today do not follow the rules and rituals described in Leviticus. But some ignore its definitions of their own “uncleanness” while quoting Leviticus to condemn “homosexuals.” Such abuse of Scripture distorts the Old Testament meaning and denies a New Testament message.

“You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination.” These words occur solely in the Holiness Code of Leviticus, a ritual manual for Israel’s priests. Their meaning can only be fully appreciated in the historical and cultural context of the ancient Hebrew people. Israel, in a unique place as the chosen people of one God, was to avoid the practices of other peoples and gods.

Hebrew religion, characterized by the revelation of one God, stood in continuous tension with the religion of the surrounding Canaanites who worshipped the multiple gods of fertility cults. Canaanite idol worship, which featured female and male cult prostitution as noted in Deuteronomy 23:17, repeatedly compromised Israel’s loyalty to God. The Hebrew word for a male cult prostitute, *qadesh*, is mistranslated “sodomite” in some versions of the Bible.

What is an “Abomination”?

An abomination is that which God found detestable because it was unclean, disloyal, or unjust. Several Hebrew words were so translated, and the one found in Leviticus, *toevah*, is usually associated with idolatry, as in Ezekiel, where it occurs numerous times. Given the strong association of *toevah* with idolatry and the Canaanite religious practice of cult prostitution, the use of *toevah* regarding male same-sex acts in Leviticus calls into question any conclusion that such condemnation also applies to loving, responsible homosexual relationships.

Rituals and rules found in the Old Testament were given to preserve the distinctive characteristics of the religion and culture of Israel. But, as stated in Galatians 3:22–25, Christians are no longer bound by these Jewish laws. By faith we live in Jesus Christ, not in Leviticus. To be sure, ethical concerns apply to all cultures and peoples in every age. Such concerns were ultimately reflected by Jesus Christ, who said nothing about homosexuality, but a great deal about love, justice, mercy and faith.

ROMANS 1:24–27

Most New Testament books, including the four Gospels, are silent on same-sex acts, and Paul is the only author who makes any reference to the subject. The most negative statement by Paul regarding same-sex acts occurs in Romans 1:24–27 where, in the context of a larger argument on the need of all people for the gospel of Jesus Christ, certain homosexual behavior is given as an example of the “uncleanness” of idolatrous Gentiles.

Does this passage refer to *all* homosexual acts, or to *certain* homosexual behavior known to Paul’s readers? Romans was written to Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome, who would have been familiar with the infamous sexual excesses of their contemporaries, especially Roman emperors. They would also have been aware of tensions in the early Church regarding Gentiles and observance of the Jewish laws, as noted in Acts 15 and Paul’s letter to the Galatians. Jewish laws in Leviticus mentioned male same-sex acts in the context of idolatry.

What is “Natural”?

Significant to Paul’s discussion is the fact that these “unclean” Gentiles exchanged that which was “natural” for them—*physin*, in the Greek text—for something “unnatural,” *para physin*. In Romans 11:24, God acts in an “unnatural” way, *para physin*, to accept the Gentiles. “Unnatural” in these passages does not refer to violation of so-called laws of nature, but rather implies action contradicting one’s own nature. In view of this, we should observe that it is “unnatural,” *para physin*, for a person today with a lesbian or gay sexual orientation to attempt living a heterosexual lifestyle.

Romans 1:26 is the only statement in the Bible with a possible reference to lesbian behavior, although the specific intent of this verse is unclear. Some authors have seen in this passage a reference to women adopting a dominant role in heterosexual relationships. Given the repressive cultural expectations placed on women in Paul’s time, such a meaning may be possible.

The homosexual practices cited in Romans 1:24–27 were believed to result from idolatry and are associated with some very serious offenses as noted in Romans 1. Taken in this larger context, it should be obvious that such acts are significantly different from loving, responsible lesbian and gay relationships seen today.

I CORINTHIANS 6:9 & I TIMOTHY 1:10

Any consideration of New Testament statements on same-sex acts must carefully view the social context of the Greco-Roman culture in which Paul ministered. Prostitution and pederasty (sexual relationships of adult men with boys) were the most commonly known male same-sex acts.

In I Corinthians 6:9, Paul condemns those who are “effeminate” and “abusers of themselves with mankind,” as translated in the King James version. Unfortunately, some newer translations are worse, rendering these words “homosexuals.” Recent scholarship unmasks the homophobia behind such mistranslations. The first word—*malakos*, in the Greek text—which has been translated “effeminate” or “soft,” most likely refers to someone who lacks discipline or moral control. The word is used elsewhere in the New Testament but never with reference to sexuality.

The second word, *arsenokoitai*, occurs once each in I Corinthians and I Timothy, but nowhere else in other literature of the period. It is derived from two Greek words, one meaning “males” and the other “beds,” a euphemism for sexual intercourse. Other Greek words were commonly used to describe homosexual behavior but do not appear here. The larger context of I Corinthians 6 shows Paul extremely concerned with prostitution, so it is very possible he was referring to male prostitutes. But many experts now attempting to translate these words have reached a simple conclusion: their precise meaning is uncertain.

No Law Against Love

The rarity with which Paul discusses any form of same-sex behavior and the ambiguity in references attributed to him make it extremely unsound to conclude any sure position in the New Testament on homosexuality, especially in the context of loving, responsible relationships. Since any arguments must be made from silence, it is much more reliable to turn to great principles of the Gospel taught by Jesus Christ and the Apostles. *Love God with all your heart, and love your neighbor as yourself. Do not judge others, lest you be judged. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is love . . . against such there is no law.*

One thing is abundantly clear, as Paul stated in Galatians 5:14: “the whole Law is fulfilled in one statement, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

OTHER INSIGHTS

"The homosexuality the New Testament opposes is the pederasty of the Greco-Roman culture; the attitudes toward pederasty and, in part, the language used to oppose it are informed by the Jewish background."

*Robin Scroggs, Professor of Biblical Theology
Union Theological Seminary, New York City*

"One cannot be absolutely certain that the two key words in I Corinthians 6:9 are meant as references to male homosexual behavior."

*Victor Paul Furnish, Professor of New Testament
Perkins School of Theology, Dallas*

"The strongest New Testament argument against homosexual activity as intrinsically immoral has been derived traditionally from Romans 1:26, where this activity is indicated as *para physin*. The normal English translation for this has been 'against nature.' Two interpretations can be justified concerning what Paul meant by the phrase. It could refer to the individual pagan, who goes beyond his own sexual appetites in order to indulge in new sexual pleasures. The second possibility is that *physis* refers to the 'nature' of the chosen people who were forbidden by Levitical law to have homosexual relations."

*John J. McNeill, Adjunct Professor of Psychology
Union Theological Seminary, New York City*

"A close reading of Paul's discussion of homosexual acts in Romans 1 does not support the common modern interpretation of the passage. Paul did not deny the existence of a distinction between clean and unclean and even assumed that Jewish Christians would continue to observe the purity code. He refrained, however, from identifying physical impurity with sin or demanding that Gentiles adhere to that code."

*L. William Countryman, Professor of New Testament
Church Divinity School of the Pacific, Berkeley*

"The Hebrew word '*toevah*,' here translated 'abomination,' does not usually signify something intrinsically evil, like rape or theft (discussed elsewhere in Leviticus), but something which is ritually unclean for Jews, like eating pork or engaging in intercourse during menstruation, both of which are prohibited in these same chapters."

*John Boswell, Professor of History
Yale University, New Haven*

HELPFUL READING

The following books are highly recommended for those wishing to carefully study issues of homosexuality as related to the Christian Church:

Boswell, John (1980). *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Countryman, L. William (1988). *Dirt, Greed, and Sex: Sexual Ethics in the New Testament and Their Implications for Today*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Edwards, George R. (1984). *Gay/Lesbian Liberation: A Biblical Perspective*. New York: Pilgrim Press.

Furnish, Victor Paul (1979). *The Moral Teaching of Paul*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Horner, Tom (1978). *Jonathan Loved David: Homosexuality in Biblical Times*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press.

McNeill, John J. (1988). *The Church and the Homosexual*. Boston: Beacon Press. Orig. pub. 1976.

Scanzoni, Letha and Virginia Ramey Mollenkott (1978). *Is The Homosexual My Neighbor?* New York: Harper and Row.

Scroggs, Robin (1983). *The New Testament and Homosexuality*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

AN INVITATION

Thousands of lesbians and gay men, along with many friends and family members, have discovered new freedom and deep inner peace in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Their association with Metropolitan Community Church has brought a new measure of fulfillment and meaning to their lives.

Whoever you are, wherever you may be, whatever the circumstances of your life, it is important for you to know that Jesus Christ died to take away your sins, not your sexuality. Christ accepts you as you are, and so do we. You are always welcome at MCC!



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This pamphlet was written by the Reverend Elder Donald Eastman,
Second Vice Moderator of the UFMCC Board of Elders.

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LET
US
KNOW
HOW
TO



our story too

lesbians
&
gay men
in the
bible

READING THE BIBLE WITH "NEW EYES"

Most modern gay men and lesbians are either afraid of the Bible or unfamiliar with its content, thinking that the Bible has only bad news for them. While it is true that the Bible was written in the context of patriarchal, heterosexist cultures, the message and story of God's unconditional love in Christ can be the "power of salvation" for gays and lesbians as well as for heterosexuals.

A bold, proactive reading of the Bible offers new life for lesbians, gay men, and their families and friends. Consensus is growing among respected scholars of Scripture that the Bible does not condemn such relationships.¹ Contemporary gay and lesbian Christians have focused on proving that the Bible does not condemn homosexuality. It is time to move beyond defending this position. It is not enough for the Bible simply not to condemn homosexuality. Gays and lesbians must be able to say, "Yes, it is our story, too!"

Opening Doors of Ancient Closets

Liberation theology and feminist Biblical critique have shown that the Bible, in order to empower all people, must be read with new eyes from the vantage point of oppressed peoples. When we read the Biblical stories through today's experience, they come alive with new relevance. What if we just assume that lesbian and gay people were always in the Bible? Their historical counterparts followed Moses and Miriam in the Exodus, and walked with Jesus by the Sea of Galilee! Lesbian and gay men are everywhere, and always have been, even when silent and closeted about their sexuality.

It is time to boldly liberate some Biblical gay, lesbian, or bisexual characters and stories from ancient closets. Centuries of silence in Biblical commentaries and reference books must now be broken by a passionate search for Biblical truth about sexuality. Does the Bible include references to, or stories about, gays and lesbians consistent with what historians and anthropologists know about sexuality during Biblical times? The answer is, "Yes!" Some stories are incontrovertible. Others are compellingly gay and lesbian. And, there are other stories curiously suggestive of same-sex relationship. All of these can empower lesbians and gay men to joyfully embrace the Bible.



A LESBIAN AND GAY "NATION"

The book of Acts in an account of the early Church as it attempts to preach and live an "unhindered gospel" (Acts 28:31). Today, there is a great, global awakening of gay and lesbian communities, who still need access to an "unhindered gospel."

Two crucial stories are central to such a gospel: Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10) and Phillip and the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8). Both have their roots in the prophecies of Isaiah 56. Isaiah proclaims a future day when Gentiles and eunuchs will be included among the people of God, and their sacrifices will be "acceptable." The Greek translation of the Hebrew word for "acceptable" in Isaiah 56:7 also appears in Acts 10:35.

An Unhindered Inclusive Gospel

In the story of Peter and the Roman centurion Cornelius (a Gentile), Peter is given a divine revelation from God: "... God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to God." (Acts 10:34-35)

The world "nation" is actually the Greek word *ethnos* from which we derive our word "ethnic." The term refers to a race, culture or people. Thus Peter learns that among every race, culture or people those who fear God and do what is right are eligible for baptism.

Is the gay and lesbian community just a political lobby for homosexual behavior, or is it an *ethnos*? Certainly, there are heterosexual people who engage in homosexual sex, and gay and lesbian people who may never have sex at all. Are gay and lesbian people a kind of behavior, or a kind of people for whom homoerotic attraction is one characteristic?

An *ethnos* could be defined by a common history, vocabulary, culture, institutions (schools, libraries, clubs, churches, synagogues, social organizations, businesses) heroes, political leaders, scholars, values, and the ability to recognize each other even when submerged in the dominant culture. If these constitute an *ethnos*, gay and lesbian people are included in the word "nation" used in Acts 10.

What evidence of gay and lesbian *ethnos* exist in the Bible? This is a complex detective story made more difficult by thousands of years of heterosexist bias in secular history and Biblical scholarship.



GOD BLESSES THE “BARREN ONES”

One place to begin is with the Biblical concepts of immortality. The Hebrew scriptures are not very clear about any consistent concept of the life after death. The primary way that one would achieve immortality was through one's heirs.

The worst fate that could befall someone was to be “cut off” from one's people. This could happen by being exiled for certain crimes, by public execution, or by dying without leaving any children. Prosperity and having many children were viewed as dual signs of God's favor (Psalm 127:3-5; 128:3-6)

Better Than Sons and Daughters

In this context, female barrenness was considered a curse. A woman's worth was connected to her ability to give her husband children. The Bible is full of stories of women who desperately prayed to God to “open their wombs” (Psalm 113:9; Genesis 30:1; I Samuel 1:10)

Barrenness became a metaphor used by the prophets to describe Israel's pitiful condition when they felt abandoned or cursed by God. Isaiah 54 begins with a poignant recasting of this metaphor. Isaiah's prophetic message then revokes the curse of barrenness and Israel becomes a barren woman *with many children*. Two chapters later, Isaiah uses the term “dry tree” (a female image of barrenness) for eunuchs. It also associates the term “cut off” with eunuchs. The term “eunuch” in Isaiah 56 is possibly a generic term used to include men and women who do not have children.

The main reference in the law which may be the source of exclusion of eunuchs from the temple is Deuteronomy 23:1. Leviticus 21:17 says only those who are “unblemished can present themselves before God...” This also excludes eunuchs who in ancient pagan religions were temple priests, and perhaps excludes children born of incestuous unions.

Ultimately, Isaiah proclaims an inclusive covenant which promises the eunuchs and barren women full participation in the blessings of God and a “name better than sons and daughters... an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.”



SOME PEOPLE ARE BORN “EUNUCHS”

Who were the eunuchs of Biblical times? The word, “eunuch,” seems to refer to a male who has been castrated (often to render him “safe” for female royalty). However, there are references to eunuchs as court officials who were not necessarily physical eunuchs. Eunuchs referred to in Genesis, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel, as well as the New Testament, were not all castrated males. “Eunuch” is more generic word that many well have included barren females, gay foreign court officials and magicians and priests, as well as castrated males. Castrated males were often functionally, if not constitutionally, homosexual.

Marriage is Not for Everyone

Jesus speaks about three kinds of eunuchs: “For there are eunuchs who have been so by birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let anyone accept this who can.” (Matthew 19:12)

One might assume that eunuchs “made so by others” are those who have been castrated. Those who “made themselves eunuchs” are voluntary celibates. What of those, however, who were born eunuchs? Jesus makes it clear that heterosexual marriage is not the norm for everyone. This important comment by Jesus, which acknowledges lifestyles other than heterosexual marriage, applies to gay and lesbians.

Two stories of black eunuchs, both royal court officials, exemplify God’s redemptive action. In Jeremiah 38, an Ethiopian eunuch saves the life of Jeremiah, an unmarried prophet. Jeremiah, in turn, brings a message of God to the king which describes how Jerusalem can be saved.

Another Ethiopian eunuch, in Acts 8, is baptized by the apostle Phillip. The eunuch is reading from Isaiah 53 (awfully close to Isaiah 54 and 56!) a passage of messianic prophecy which describes the destiny of the Suffering Servant who would be “cut off” from the land of the living. The eunuch got the message that those who have been “cut off” are to be included. Hence his question, “What is to prevent me from being baptized?” Phillip the apostle answers, “Nothing!”



JESUS CHOOSE A NEW "FAMILY"

Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of Isaiah 53, was "cut off" from his people in two ways: he was executed as a criminal and died without heirs. He was a functional, if not physical, eunuch. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ redefined eternal life, dissasociating it from the necessity to produce children.

Once, when confronted by his biological mother and brothers, Jesus pointed to his disciples as a new family, saying: "For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother." (Mark 3:31)

Jesus Lived an Alternative Lifestyle

Relationships of Jesus in the Gospels differ greatly from the contemporary so-called nuclear family.

Jesus loved Lazarus, Mary and Martha. What drew Jesus to his very non-traditional family group of a bachelor brother living with two spinster sisters? Two barren women and a eunuch are Jesus adult family of choice. Are we to assume they were all celibate heterosexuals? What if Mary and Martha were not sisters but called each other "sisters" as did most lesbian couples throughout recorded history?

John's gospel refers no less than eight times to the "one whom Jesus loved," also called "beloved disciple." Scholars rarely explore that fact that Jesus obviously had a particularly close friendship with one man. Whether or not Jesus was gay, homophobia has silenced exploration of this relationship.

The Bible, in fact, knows almost nothing of the Post-Reformation ideal of monogamous, lifetime romantic heterosexual marriage. The Bible portrays marriage in terms of property and business transactions, polygamy, extended family, tribal groupings, Levirate marriage and other lifestyles. The anti-marriage bias in the New Testament and sex-negative emphasis of early theologians is well known by historians and students of human sexuality.

The new Christian community in Acts includes childless widows, former prostitutes, social outcasts, celibates, married people, eunuchs, blacks, Jews, and Gentiles. Those previously excluded were now fulfilling the promise of Isaiah 56: "My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples."



SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIP IN THE BIBLE

The stories of two prominent same-sex couples in the Scriptures provide gay men and lesbians with Biblical models of committed love in stressful circumstances.

The book of Ruth is a romantic novel but not about romance between Ruth and Boaz. Naomi is actually the central character, and Ruth is the “redeemer / hero.” Boaz’ relationship with Ruth, far from being romantic, is a matter of family duty and property. This story contains the most moving promise of relational fidelity between two persons in all of the Bible: “And Ruth said, ‘Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.’” (Ruth 1:16)

Although used in heterosexual marriage ceremonies for years, this is a vow between two women! When their husbands die in battle, Ruth makes this vow to Naomi, her mother-in-law. Ruth marries Boaz, a close relative, and redeems Naomi’s place in her own family, also bearing a child for Naomi. Did Ruth and Naomi have a lesbian relationship? There’s no way to know, but it is clear the two women had a lifelong, passionate, committed relationship celebrated in Scripture.

United in a Covenant of Love

Another story, that of David and Jonathan, occurs in a time when male warrior / lovers were common and considered noble. This tragic triangle of passion, jealousy and political intrigue between Saul, Jonathan and David, leads to one of the most direct expressions of same-sex love in the Bible: “I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; you have been very pleasant to me. Your love to me was more wonderful than the love of women.” (II Samuel 1:26)

The author is clearly attuned to David’s classic male beauty (I Samuel 16:12) in this story of love and loyalty marked by romantic (I Samuel 18:1-5), secret meetings (I Samuel 20:1-23; 35-42), kissing and weeping (I Samuel 20:41), refusal to eat (I Samuel 28:32-34), and the explicit warrior / lover covenant which David keeps after Jonathan’s death (I Samuel 20:12-17; 42). One cannot read this account without discerning that Jonathan was the love of David’s life. Centuries of homophobic Biblical interpretations have kept them in the closet too long!²



IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

Is that all there is? A few prophecies about barrenness and eunuchs and only two same-sex couples? There is more, and scholars need to explore the possibilities:

▼ Are the eunuchs in the Joseph story (Genesis 39-45) and the book of Esther also gay, residing in royal courts, and rescuing God's leaders?

▼ In the parable of the woman who has lost a coin (Luke 15), she had ten and lost one. Are gays and lesbians a lost coin joyfully rediscovered in our day? Gays and lesbians are now estimated to be ten percent of the population. Are they a tithe of humanity? Are they the leaven in the loaf every culture?

▼ A centurion petitions Jesus for the healing of a servant who is dear to him (Luke 7). The Greek word in Matthew 8 is *pais* meaning "slave boy," which commonly described a homosexual relationship in those times. Why did Jesus praise the faith of the centurion but not condemn his lifestyle?

▼ Paul, the apostle, had no sympathy for heterosexuals who couldn't control their sexual desires. At the same time, his stormy relational life was centered around men, such as Timothy, Barnabas and Silas. Were his tirades against co-workers and churches, and his tireless missionary zeal partly a way to suppress his homosexuality?

▼ In the story of the rich young ruler (Mark 10), "Jesus looking upon him loved him." What is the connection of embodied spirituality and his "love" for a needy stranger? What studies have been done about the eight times Jesus was said to "love" someone? How was Jesus' particular "love" for individuals related to his sexuality?

▼ What of Lydia (Acts 16), the independent, Gentile businesswoman, seller of purple and the first European Christian? There is no mention of her husband, or children, yet she is noted to have led a women's group to whom Paul preached. Was Lydia a lesbian?

▼ The color purple is often used in connection with royalty, or suffering and passion, or transformation and magic. It is the color which Jesus wore to the cross. Does the color purple also have gay and lesbian connotations in the Bible and in Christian liturgical tradition?³



WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

What difference does it make for gays and lesbians to dare see themselves in the Bible? It helps to know the people of the Bible as they were, not unrealistically assuming they were all heterosexual. In these references to gays and lesbians, there is no condemnation, and no cross-referencing to homophobic interpretations of the story of Sodom or Levitical law. It invites lesbian and gay communities to fearlessly read the Bible, to apply its healing and empowering message to their lives.

Footnotes

¹Consultation of the National Council of Churches of Christ, USA, on "Biblical Issues and Homosexuality," Unpublished papers, 1987. Six infamous passages in the Bible are used against gays and lesbians—all of which must be taken out of context when directed against them. A thorough, yet concise, commentary on these passages is provided in the pamphlet, *Homosexuality: Not a Sin, Not a Sickness*, by Donald Eastman, referenced below.

²This section, "Same-Sex Relationships," is indebted to Tom Horner's *Jonathan Loved David: Homosexuality in Biblical Times*, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1978.

³This section, "Important Questions," is indebted to Judy Grahn's *Another Mother Tongue*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1984.

Further Reading

The following sources are recommended for those wishing to more carefully study related issues:

Boyd, Malcom and Nancy L. Wilson (1991). *Amazing Grace: Stories of Lesbian & Gay Faith*. Freedom: Crossing Press.

Eastman, Donald (1990). *Homosexuality: Not a Sin, Not a Sickness*. Los Angeles: Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.

McNeill, John J. (1988). *The Church and the Homosexual*. Boston: Beacon Press. Orig. Pub. 1976.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elizabeth (1988). *In Memory of Her*. New York: Crossroads Publishing Company.

Spong, John Shelby (1991). *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco.





METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH

*e*alling people to new life
through the liberating
Gospel of Jesus Christ ...

*e*onfronting the injustice
of poverty, sexism, racism,
and homophobia through
Christian social action ...

*e*reating a community
of healing and reconciliation
through faith, hope, and love.

FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

UFMCC

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(310) 360-8640
Web Page: <http://www.ufmcc.com>



This pamphlet was written by the Rev. Nancy L. Wilson, Pastor of Metropolitan Community Church Los Angeles and Member of the Board of Elders, UFMCC.

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Graphic design and typography by Seda's Printing, Inc.



**BYLAWS
FOR THE OPERATION
OF THE CHURCH**

**REVEREND IKE PARKER
SENIOR PASTOR**

REVISED: JANUARY 1999

By-Laws of
ALL SAINTS MCC
ARTICLE I.

- A. The name of this church shall be "ALL SAINTS METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH - ATLANTA."
- B. All Saints Metropolitan Community Church - Atlanta has accepted a commission from and is thereby an affiliated church of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Church.
- C. Hereafter, when the terms "All Saints MCC," ASMCC, "the local church" or "this church" appear, the reference is to All Saints Metropolitan Community Church - Atlanta.
- D. Hereafter, when the phrase "UFMCC" or the work "Fellowship" appear, the reference is to the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.
- E. Hereafter, when the word "District" appears it refers to the district of UFMCC to which All Saints MCC has been assigned.
- F. Hereafter, when the word "Area" appears, it refers to the geographic area within the District to which this church has been assigned.
- G. Hereafter, when the words "Congregation" or "Membership" are used, the reference shall be to those members as defined in Article VII of the UFMCC By Laws.
- H. Hereafter, when the word "Friends" is used, it shall refer to those "Friends of the Church" as defined in Article VII of the UFMCC By Laws.
- I. Hereafter, when the term "SOP" is used, it shall refer to the Standard Operating Procedures of this local church.
- J. Hereafter, when the term "Pastor" appears, it shall refer to the person serving as Senior Pastor or Pastoral Leader.

ARTICLE II
PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

PURPOSE - All Saints Metropolitan Community Church subscribes to the purposes and objectives as written in the By Laws of the UFMCC, namely:

1 A. To bind together individuals for the purpose of sharing in the worship
2 of God in the Christian tradition, and to make God's will dominant in the lives
3 of all people, individually and collectively, as set forth in the Holy Scriptures,.

4
5 B. To instruct in theology and kindred subjects for the
6 propagation of the teachings of the Christian Faith as accepted by the UFMCC
7 and approved by this Church.

8
9 C. To instruct and encourage those who offer themselves into
10 the teachings and philosophy as received by this body.

11
12 D. To do all things that are compatible with the work of a
13 Christian Church.

14
15 E. COVENANT:

16
17 Promoting the worship of our Lord God as exemplified by
18 the life and teaching of Jesus Christ; striving to meet the
19 spiritual needs of the total community; setting a Christian
20 example, individually and collectively; furthering causes of
21 social responsibility, justice and peace; forming a fellowship
22 of individuals of diverse backgrounds, recognizing that there
23 are no barriers between God and God's children, and
24 realizing the full potential of a Christian ministry that relies
25 upon the power of intercessory prayer.

26
27 ARTICLE III
28 DOCTRINE, SACRAMENTS AND RITES

29
30 I. DOCTRINE: Christianity is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and
31 is the religion set forth in the Scriptures. Jesus Christ is foretold in the Old
32 Testament, presented in the New Testament, and proclaimed in the Christian
33 Church in every age and in every land. Founded in the interest of offering a
34 home to all who confess and believe, the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan
35 Community Churches moves in the mainstream of Christianity.

36
37 Our Faith is based on the principals outlines in the historic creeds: Apostles
38 and Nicene.

39
40 WE BELIEVE:

41
A. In one triune God, omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient, of
one substance and of three persons: God - Our Parent-Creator; Jesus Christ -
the only begotten son of God, God in Flesh, human; and the Holy Spirit - God
as our Sustainer.

1 B. That the Bible is the divinely inspired word of God, showing forth
2 God to every person through the law and the prophets, and finally, completely
3 and ultimately on earth in the being of Jesus Christ.

4
5 C. That Jesus, The Christ, historically recorded as living some 2,000
6 years before this writing, is God incarnate, of human birth, fully God and fully
7 human, and that by being one with God, Jesus has demonstrated once and
8 forever that all people are likewise Children of God, being spiritually made in
9 God's image.

10
11 D. That the Holy Spirit is God making known God's love and interest to
12 all people. The Holy Spirit is God, available to and working through all who
13 are willing to place their welfare in God's keeping.

14
15 E. Every person is justified by grace to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

16
17 F. We are saved from loneliness, despair, and degradation through God's
18 gift of grace, as was declared by our Savior. Such grace is not earned, but is a
19 pure gift from a God of pure love.

20 We further commend the community of the faithful to a life of prayer;
21 to seek genuine forgiveness for unkind, thoughtless, and unloving acts; and to a
22 committed life of Christian service.

23
24 G. The church serves to bring all people to God through Christ. To this
25 end, it shall arrange for regular services of worship, prayer, interpretation of
26 the Scriptures, and edification through the teaching and preaching of the
27 Word.

28
29 II. SACRAMENTS: The church embraces two holy sacraments:

30
31 A. BAPTISM by water and the holy spirit, as recorded in the Scriptures,
32 shall be a sign of the dedication of each life to God and God's service.
33 Through the words and acts of this sacrament, the recipient is identified as
34 God's own child.

35
36 B. HOLY COMMUNION is the partaking of blessed bread and fruit of
37 the vine in accordance with the words of Jesus, our Sovereign: "This is my
38 body....this is my blood." (Matthew 26: 26-28) All who believe and confess,
39 and repent and seek God's love through Christ, after examining their
40 consciences, may freely participate in the communal meal, signifying their
41 desire to be received into community through Jesus Christ, to be saved by
42 Jesus Christ's sacrifice, to participate in Jesus Christ's sacrifice, to participate in
43 Jesus Christ's resurrection, and to commit their lives anew to the service of
44 Jesus Christ.

1 III. RITES: The Rites of the Church as performed by its duly authorized
2 ministers shall consist of the following:

3
4 A. The RITE OF ORDINATION is the setting apart of duly qualified
5 persons for the professional ministry of this church. It is evidenced by the
6 laying on of hands by authorized ordained clergy, pursuant to the UFMCC
7 bylaws.

8
9 B. The RITE OF ATTAINING MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHURCH shall
10 be conducted by the Senior Pastor before a local congregation at any regular
11 worship service. After completing classes for instruction in the beliefs and
12 doctrines of the church, a baptized Christian may become a member in good
13 standing of the local church group through a letter of transfer from a
14 recognized Christian body or through affirmation of faith.

15
16 C. The RITE OF HOLY UNION and the RITE OF HOLY
17 MATRIMONY are the spiritual joining of two persons in a manner fitting and
18 proper by a duly authorized clergy of the church. After both persons have
19 been counseled and appraised of their responsibilities one towards the other,
20 this rite of conferring God's blessing may be performed.

21
22 D. The RITE OF FUNERAL OR MEMORIAL SERVICE is to be fittingly
23 conducted by the ministers of the church for the deceased.

24
25 E. The RITE OF LAYING ON OF HANDS or prayer for the healing of
26 the sick in mind, body, or spirit is to be conducted by the ministers of the
27 Church, at their discretion, upon request.

28
29 F. The RITE OF BLESSING may be conducted by the ministers of the
30 church for persons, things, and relationships, when deemed appropriate by the
31 minister. This includes the dedication of a church building to the Glory of
32 God.

33
34 ARTICLE IV.
35 GOVERNMENT

36 A. CONGREGATION

37 1. The government of this church is vested in its members who
38 exert the right to control all of its affairs, subject to the By Laws of the District
39 and Fellowship, and such articles of Incorporation as may be in effect.

40
41 2. The members shall elect a pastor, and a board of directors to
42 conduct the operations of the church at regularly scheduled or special
43 congregational meetings, as outlined in Article VII. The actions of the Board
44 of Directors are subject to the approval of the Congregation at the next
45 congregational meeting.

B. PASTOR:

In accordance with UFMCC Bylaws, Article V, B-2: and in addition as listed in the SOP's.

C. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In accordance with UFMCC Bylaws, Article V, Section 3, and in addition as listed in the SOP's. Also the following:

1. Structure:

a. The senior pastor is a permanent board member, so long as that person is serving as senior pastor. In addition, the board shall consist of not less than four (4) or more than six (6) lay voting members of the church; until such time as the active membership reaches one hundred (100), at which time the board of directors will be increased to eight (8) members. Upon attaining two hundred (200) active members, the board of directors will be increased to nine (9) directors.

b. Board of director position increases, based upon membership, shall be at the wisdom of the board of directors, until the next annual congregational meeting.

(1) Qualifications:

(a) A candidate for the Board of Directors must be a members in good standing of this local church continuously for at least six (6) months, prior to the election. Directors must be of legal voting age in the State of Georgia.

(b) No one that serves on pastoral/support staff, other than the senior pastor, shall serve on the board of directors except under extreme circumstances.

i. Candidates for the board of directors must submit a written application stating the position they wish to be elected for to the Nominating Committee in order to be considered a candidate for election for that specific position.

ii. All applicants should submit their applications for the specific position for which they are running to the nominating Committee a minimum of forty-five (45) days prior to the annual congregational meeting.

iii. The Nominating Committee must verify that each applicant meets the qualifications of membership as set forth in Article I, Section A.

iv. No nominations from the floor of the annual congregational meeting will be considered.

2. Method of Election:

a. It shall be the duty of the nominating committee to seek nominees for open positions on the board of directors and the nominating

2. a. Method of election - continued

committee shall be regulated by specific Bylaws/SOP's pertaining to its functions.

b. Election of board members shall take place at the annual congregational meeting. All ballots will be secret, and the vote totals will not be announced. Ballots shall be prepared by the clerk and the nominees receiving the highest number of votes, but not less than 50%, shall be elected.

c. It shall be the duty of the board of directors to appoint a nominating committee four (4) months prior to the annual congregational meeting.

i. Members appointed to the nominating committee must be members in good standing for at least one (1) year prior to appointment.

ii. The chair of the nominating committee must be appointed from the pastoral/support staff, excluding the senior pastor.

iii. At least one (1) member must be a current member of the board of directors who is not seeking election.

3. Term of Office:

a. Board members will be elected at each annual congregational meeting for a two (2) year or (1) year term. Board members terms will always be staggered. The determination of which members are elected for two (2) year terms and which members are elected for one (1) year terms shall be at the discretion of the board of directors. No member may serve more than two consecutive terms in office.

b. Installation of the newly elected board members shall take place during worship service on the first Sunday after the congregational meeting, where term of office begins immediately after installation.

4. Vacancy:

a. In the event of a vacancy on the board of directors due to death, resignation, or removal, the remaining members shall appoint a member in good standing to fill the vacancy until the next congregational meeting. A special congregational meeting may be called to fill the vacancy.

b. Any board member, excluding the senior pastor, who wishes to relinquish that position shall submit to the board in writing or verbally to a minimum of two (2) board members a request for the acceptance of the resignation stating reasons for actions and the effective date. The board of directors upon acceptance of the written or verbal resignation will notify the congregation of the action on the following Sunday.

1 5. Officers:

2
3 a. As in the UFMCC Bylaws, the Senior Pastor shall be the
4 moderator of the board of directors so long as that person is the senior pastor
5 of this church.

6
7 b. In the event that no one runs for or is elected to a specified
8 vacant position, i.e. a vice-moderator, a treasurer, or a clerk, then the Board
9 of Directors shall elect a vice-moderator, a treasurer, a clerk and any other
10 offices it deems neccessary.

11
12 6. Meetings:

13
14 a. The board of directors shall meet at least once a month at a
15 time and place decided upon by its members. A quorum shall consist of fifty
16 percent (50%) or more of the members of the board. Board meetings shall
17 be open to all members of the congregation, except when matters of a
18 personal or confidential nature require an executive session.

19
20 b. Special meetings of the board may be called by the senior
21 pastor or a majority of the board. All Board Members must be informed. In
22 extreme emergency the senior pastor or any member of the board, with the
23 approval of fifty percent (50%) of the board members, may call a special
24 meeting to handle the emergency situation at any time agreed upon.

25
26
27 7. Discipline: If a board member misses three (3) regular meetings
28 within one (1) calendar year without good cause, the board will declare the
29 seat vacant and appoint a new member to server until the next congregational
30 meeting. The board shall send a written warning letter to any board member
31 after the second absence. Board members are expected to attend services and
32 functions on a regular basis. In addition, see reference in UFMCC Bylaws,
33 Article V.B.3.c concerning discipline of board of directors.

34
35 8. Duties:

36
37 a. The senior pastor and/or the board of directors shall have the
38 authority to establish any committee deemed necessary to the operation of the
39 church. The senior pastor shall appoint committee chairpersons. The board
40 of directors shall approve all appointments. Committee chairpersons shall be
41 members in good standing.

42
43 b. The board shall be responsible for performing all duties as
44 specified in the UFMCC Bylaws and in addition, as outlined in SOP's for the
45 vice moderator, treasurer, and clerk or any other officers deemed necessary by
46 the board of directors.

1
2 9. Lay Delegate:
3

4 a. Qualifications:
5

6 (1) A candidate for Lay delegate or alternate lay delegate
7 must be a member in good standing of this local church continuously
8 for at least six (6) months prior to the election and abide by Article
9 V.C.3. The lay delegate or alternate lay delegate must be of legal
10 voting age in the State of Georgia.
11

12 (2) Student clergy are not eligible for the positions of lay
13 delegate or alternate lay delegate.
14

15 b. Elections:
16

17 (1) As specified in UFMCC Bylaws, the congregation shall
18 elect one (1) lay delegate for every one hundred (100) members in
19 good standing or portion thereof. This delegate shall be elected at the
20 first congregational meeting following each UFMCC General
21 Conference and shall serve for a term of two (2) years. The lay
22 delegate shall only be able to hold office for two (2) consecutive two
23 (2) year terms.
24

25 (2) Alternate lay delegates: The congregation will also elect
26 an alternate lay delegate for each lay delegate at the same
27 congregational meeting to represent the church in the absence of the
28 lay delegate. This alternate lay delegate shall also serve for a period of
29 two (2) years. In addition, the alternate lay delegate shall be elected
30 by Article V.C.3.
31

32 c. Vacancy:
33

34 (1) In the event that the elected delegate(s) or alternates are
35 unable to represent the church, the board of directors may appoint
36 substitute delegates for that meeting.

37 (2) In the event of a death, resignation, or removal of a lay
38 delegate or alternate lay delegate, the vacancy shall be filled in the
39 same manner described in Article V.C.5.b. for board vacancies.
40

41 d. Discipline/removal: Lay delegates are subject to the same
42 procedures as board of directors as listed in local Bylaws Article
43 V.C.8.
44
45
46

1 ARTICLE V.
2 CHURCH MEMBERSHIP
3

4 A. ATTAINING MEMBERSHIP: Membership classes shall be conducted
5 by the senior pastor or pastoral leader. After completing classes for instruction
6 in the beliefs and doctrines of the church, a baptized Christian may become a
7 member in good standing of the local church group, through a letter of
8 transfer from a recognized Christian body or through affirmation of faith
9 before a local congregation at any regular worship service.
10

11 B. MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING: At least twice a year the board
12 of directors of the church shall review the entire membership. Any member
13 who does not have a registered attendance, identified financial support,
14 definite service contribution, and expressed interest and loyalty within a period
15 of six (6) months, may be placed on a list of inactive members. At that time,
16 the board of directors of the church shall notify the member in writing that the
17 member has been placed on inactive status and is not eligible to vote at any
18 business meeting of the church. After notification, the member may be
19 restored to the rolls of members in good standing of the congregation by a
20 vote of the board of directors of the church without public reception into
21 membership.
22

23 C. FRIENDS OF THE CHURCH: As state in the UFMCC Bylaws,
24 Article VII, Section B.
25

26 D. DISCIPLINE/REMOVAL PROCEDURES: As stated in the UFMCC
27 Bylaws, Article VII, Section C and Local SOP's.
28

29 E. PURGING OF THE MEMBERSHIP ROLES: The board of directors
30 shall purge the membership roles at the monthly board meetings in January
31 and July (See "B" above).
32

33 ARTICLE VI.
34 CHURCH SERVICES
35

36 As stated in the UFMCC Bylaws, Article VIII.
37

38 ARTICLE VII.
39 CHURCH MEETINGS
40

41 As stated in the UFMCC Bylaws, Article IX.C. In addition, the local church
42 will conduct an annual congregational meeting each year during the month of
43 October. The date, time, place, nature and purpose of this congregational
44 meeting shall be given in writing via U.S. Mail to all members at least two (2)
45 weeks prior to the date of the meeting.
46

- 1 A. THE ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
2 1. The permanent agenda of the Annual Congregational Meeting shall
3 include:
4 A. Board actions of the previous twelve (12) months.
5 B. Minutes of the last congregational meeting.
6 C. Treasurer's Report
7 D. Lay Delegate(s) and Alternate Lay Delegate election (on odd-
8 numbered years).
9 E. Board elections
10 F. Budget for the coming year.
11
12 2. Other items for the agenda may be added by:
13 A. The Senior Pastor
14 B. The Board of Directors
15 C. Members in attendance at the Congregational
16 Meeting, prior to the adoption of the agenda..
17
18 3. Notice of the meeting shall be publicly announced and made in
19 writing during the services on the two Sundays preceding the meeting.
20
21 B. Special meetings of the local congregation may be called by anyone of
22 the following means, provided that each member is given two (2) weeks
23 written notice via U. S. Mail prior to the special meeting:
24 1. The Senior Pastor
25 2. A majority of the Board of Directors
26 3. Petition:
27 A. This petition must be signed by twenty-five percent (25%)
28 of the active church membership.
29 B. This petition must be submitted to the Moderator or
30 the Clerk, who will verify the signatures and call the meeting.
31 C. The nature and purpose of the special meeting must
32 be stated in the petition and notice, and written into the agenda of the
33 special meeting. Only those items specified in the notification will be
34 considered.
35
36 C. VOTING: Voting rights may only be exercised by those local
37 church members in attendance at any congregational meeting. To be eligible
38 to vote at any congregational meeting, membership must be in effect at the
39 time when notice was given of the special meeting.
40
41 D. QUORUM: A quorum, consisting of no less than twenty-five
42 percent (25%) of the active members of the church, shall be necessary to
43 conduct business.
44
45
46

ARTICLE VIII.
CHURCH FINANCES

As stated in UFMCC Bylaws, Article X. Also:

A. The treasurer of the board shall give a montly report to the board and an annual report to the congregation with both being published.

B. Any Organization or committee within the local church that is responsible for monies must give a monthly accounting report in time for the treasurer's monthly report.

C. The Finance Committee , represented by the Treasurer, shall propose an annual budget to be presented to the Board of Directors at the September Meeting for approval. This budget will then be submitted to the Congregation at the Annual Congregational Meeting for final approval..

1. The Finance Committee will include in its annual budget the amount projected for UFMCC Tithing (10%), District Tithing (5%), and pay the Pension Fund as required by UFMCC.

D. The Board of Directors shall have the power to authorize budget variances up to twenty-five percent (25%) in anyone category, but not to exceed more than ten percent (10%) of the total budget. This applies only if funds are available.

E. Budget approval may be revised by the congregation at any duly called Congregational Meeting.

F. The Board of Directors may not obligate the local church for any long-term debt over two thousand dollars (\$2,000) without the local congregational approval by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Active Members in attendance at any duly called Congregational Meeting.

G. For accounting purposes, the church fiscal year shall be from January 1 through December 31.

H. There shall be an annual audit of the church financial records within ninety (90) days of the closing of the fiscal year.

I. In the event that charges are levied against All Saints MCC by any local, state, or federal authority and these charges shall exceed five hundred (\$500.00), the Board of Directors shall have the authority, upon the advice of legal counsel, to pay such charges without the authorization from the congregation. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Board of Directors shall be necessary to authorize such payment. The Congregation shall be informed of any such payment at the first subsequent Congregational Meeting.

- J. All designated funds are to remain as designated unless the person donating the funds grants permission in writing to change the designation.
- K. Money designated for the Building Fund may not be used for any purpose except the purchase of a permanent meeting site.
- L. Two Board of Directors signatures are required for all expenditures.
- M. The UFMCC adopts and teaches tithing as the scripturally affirmed means of supporting the church and its ministries, and as the expression of good stewardship of time, skills, and money by individuals and church bodies. Therefore, it shall be the responsibility of both the clergy and the lay leadership of this church to plan and implement programs of stewardship both to help persons grow in grace of giving and to fund the church's ministries. An offering shall be received at each service of public worship in this local church.
- N. Before committing or expending funds for any purpose, individuals must obtain approval of the Board of Directors. All expenditures must be reasonably within the guidelines of the annual budget. In addition, all church funds shall be given into the custody of the treasurer or assistant treasurer. All funds shall be properly deposited in bank accounts as approved by the Board of Directors. Written receipts must be kept for expenditures and must include the name of the purchaser, the date, items purchased, and the amount of the expenditure.

ARTICLE IX. CHURCH PROPERTY

- A. Any negotiations or actual proposals to buy, sell, or lease for over one (1) year, real estate, passed by a majority vote of the Board of Directors at one of their meetings must be submitted to the local Congregation for approval at a Congregational Meeting, either regular or special. A (2/3) two-thirds vote of the Active Members in attendance shall be necessary for passage.
- B. Any proposal for tenting or leasing for one (1) year or less of real estate may be approved by a simple majority vote of the Board of Directors.
- C. Any expenditure for Tangible property (not including real estate) in excess of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) will be handled in the same manner as described in Item A above.
- D. Donated properties are not subject to withdrawal.

1 E. The Building Trustees Committee shall be a standing committee.
2 Members of this committee must be members in good standing. Members
3 shall be appointed by the Senior Pastor and approved by the Board of
4 Directors. This committee shall consist of at least two (2) members of the
5 Board of Directors and two (2) Lay Congregational Members.

6
7 F. Local churches which are now incorporated in the United States as
8 non-profit corporations under their state laws are required to name the
9 UFMNCC as the successor 501 (c) (3) corporation designated to receive the
10 church's property in the event of the dissolution or abandonment of that
11 incorporated church.

12 ARTICLE X. 13 CHURCH RECORDS 14

15 The confidentiality of church records is important. The Senior Pastor
16 and Board of Directors share the responsibility for maintaining the
17 confidentiality of the information about members and friends. Any use of the
18 church mailing list by other organizations or individuals is expressly prohibited.
19 All church financial records, minutes of the Board of Directors, reports of
20 commissions, projects and committees, or other official records shall be
21 available to be read in the church office by any Eligible Voting Member of the
22 church. "Closed" sessions of the Board of Directors shall remain confidential.

23 ARTICLE XI. 24 RESERVATION OF POWERS 25

26
27 All powers not delegated by the By Laws are reserved to the Board of
28 Directors of All Saints Metropolitan Community Church - Atlanta, subject to
29 the approval of the Congregation.

30 ARTICLE XII. 31 ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS 32

33
34 These By Laws may be amended or appealed, only on an article-by-
35 article basis, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Active Members in attendance
36 at any Congregational Meeting. All recommended changes must be mailed to
37 all members two (2) weeks prior to the Congregational Meeting.
38
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46

A
Short History
of
All Saints MCC

Reverend Ike Parker
Senior Pastor

During Holy Week of 1984, a few people met with the Reverend Elder Troy Perry, founder of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, to discuss the feasibility of a second MCC ministry in Atlanta. A couple of months later, 18 people were asked to attend a meeting to discuss the possibility of establishing a new church home. On June 12th, ten of them met and decided that a new ministry was needed and agreed to affiliate with the UFMCC.

At a meeting on July 10th, a covenant was adopted by consensus. This date has since been considered the founding date of All Saints MCC. The first full worship service was conducted by the district coordinator, Reverend Gil Lincoln, on Sunday, July 15, 1984, with 16 people in attendance. The District Committee approved the petition for All Saints to become an MCC Congregation and the founders were formally inducted into membership at the August 19, 1984 Sunday Worship Service.

Initially All Saints met in a house in the Northeast Section of Atlanta and then briefly at the Unitarian-Universalist Church off of Briarcliff Road before it was invited to rent space from the Grant Park/Aldersgate United Methodist Church. This began a long and fruitful relationship for both churches.

The pulpit was filled first by Reverend Byron Hilbun from Alabama who was installed as pastor in June, 1985. Reverend Hilbun wanted All Saints to become a praying church that relies on the power of intercessory prayer to meet its needs and mission. This emphasis moved the congregation to later include this important belief and emphasis in its Church Covenant officially recognizing the power of intercessory prayer. Reverend Hilbun passed away from AIDS related complications in June, 1987.

In December, 1987, Reverend Stephen Fund of Tacoma, Washington began his ministry with All Saints. The Board of Directors contracted with the Methodist Church to rent office space in the building starting in June of 1988. This was the last step required by the District to be approved for a Charter from the UFMCC. The Charter was granted and was dated July 10, 1988 to coincide with the fourth anniversary of the founding of All Saints Metropolitan Community Church.

Reverend Fund also believed strongly in the power of intercessory prayer and had a passion for church growth. He encouraged participation and leadership of the women in the church. Reverend Fund also developed strong leadership in the Deacons, the Board of Directors and stressed the discovery and use of individual spiritual gifts. Under his ministry All Saints grew to 85 members. In 1992, a portion of the congregation felt the need to establish yet another MCC church in the Stone Mountain area and under the leadership of Reverend Glenna Shepherd, Christ Covenant MCC was established. While this meant a loss of membership, it provided for a new distinctive MCC ministry in Atlanta.

In August, 1995 Reverend John Hankins assumed the pulpit on a part-time basis. Reverend Hankins' secular career as a nurse specializing in AIDS and other catastrophic illnesses allowed him to be more than just a part-time pastor and gave the church the type of healing ministry it had needed for many years. By December, 1995 the church had once again grown to 40 members and averaged between 35 and 45 people per service.

With its new growth the church sought a new location to lease, one that was better able to foster growth and out-reach; the In-Town YWCA at 957 North Highland Avenue was that space. On July 14, 1996 All Saints MCC conducted it's first worship service at the Y and a new chapter had begun. In September, 1996 with attendance at each service now above 50, the Board of Directors voted to bring Reverend Andy Mullins, the spouse of our Senior Pastor, Reverend John Hankins, aboard "officially" as the Associate Pastor.

In May of 1997 with 68 members, All Saints launched its first web site on the Internet, now found at www.allsaintsmcc.com.

In August of 1998, Pastors Hankins and Mullins moved to Montgomery Alabama to pastor an MCC church in that city. A Pastoral Search Team was formed and in December they announced that they would present Reverend Ike Parker as the pastoral candidate. Reverend Parker was in the process of transferring his credentials from the United Methodist Church - where he had eight years experience as a pastor. On February

14, 1999 Reverend Parker "officially" took the pulpit to Lead All Saints MCC into the new millennium. Pastor Parker is a graduate of Emory University's Candler School of Theology with a Master of Divinity degree and also holds a Masters of Education Administration and Supervision related to his former career as a school principal and teacher of seventeen years.

By November, 1999 the average attendance was back to well over 60 people each Sunday and the "official" membership was at 80 people. The culmination of the first months of Reverend Parker's pastorate at All Saints MCC was his credentialing as a UFMCC pastor at the November GLAD District Conference held in Augusta, Ga. Church membership now stands at 90 and we are quickly outgrowing the facility at the Mid-Town YWCA. The church is seeking to purchase or lease a building or land upon which to build a facility to house its expanding growth and ministries.

In 2000 the Building Committee found a church facility that looked promising as a purchase. With much prayer and a lot of discussion All Saints MCC purchased its first home located at 2352 Bolton Road on Atlanta's Northwest side.

When asked why members have selected All Saints, the frequent response is that it is a vibrant church where each one is accepted and valued for who they are regardless of their gender, race, sexual orientation, and status. A place where there is great music, fellowship, ministry opportunities, a message that is practical for life, and worship that blends both progressive and traditional forms of worship, as well as weekly opportunities for learning through Bible studies and personal development. Many of our newer members tell us it is a place where they feel at home. Many say they've come to be a part of the new life and growth at All Saints. Come grow with us, your fellow "Saints in the making."

The All Saints Covenant

Promoting the worship of our Lord God as exemplified by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ; striving to meet the spiritual needs of the total community; setting a Christ-like example; individually and collectively furthering causes of social responsibility, justice and peace; forming a fellowship of individuals with diverse backgrounds, recognizing that there are no barriers between God and God's children, and realizing the full potential of a Christ-centered Ministry that relies upon the power of intercessory prayer.

General Info

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Current occupation _____ Duties/Responsibilities _____

Previous occupation _____ Duties/Responsibilities _____

Have you done volunteer work? ☐ NO ☐ Yes If yes, please explain _____

Special/Other skills (i.e., things you do well) _____

Activities & Hobbies

Indicate the activities that you participate in **regularly**. Rank your top three by writing the corresponding numbers below.

1st _____
2nd _____
3rd _____

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 ☐ Movies | 17 ☐ Bicycling |
| 2 ☐ Cooking | 18 ☐ Bible/Devotional Reading |
| 3 ☐ Socializing with Friends | 19 ☐ Avid Book Reading |
| 4 ☐ Socializing with Family | 20 ☐ Taking Classes |
| 5 ☐ Travel | 21 ☐ Cars/Automotive |
| 6 ☐ Computers | 22 ☐ Attending Cultural/arts Events |
| 7 ☐ Gardening | 23 ☐ Home Workshop/Do-It-Yourself |
| 8 ☐ Collectibles/Collecting | 24 ☐ Pets (specify) _____ |
| 9 ☐ Camping/Hiking | 25 ☐ Sports-Spectator |
| 10 ☐ Photography | 26 ☐ Sports-Participant (specify) _____ |
| 11 ☐ Fine Art/Antiques | 27 ☐ Music-Listening |
| 12 ☐ Needlework/Knitting | 28 ☐ Music-Performance (specify) _____ |
| 13 ☐ Sewing | 29 ☐ Other _____ |
| 14 ☐ Crafts | _____ |
| 15 ☐ Physical Fitness/Exercise | _____ |
| 16 ☐ Electronics | _____ |

Ministries

All Saints MCC has created 5 exciting new servant ministry areas to facilitate the work of God in our church and in the community. If you had the time and/or the resources, indicate below which area(s) you would be most interested in serving. **NOTE: This is only a survey; it is not a commitment to serve or a sign-up sheet for these ministries.**

☒ WORSHIP	☒ MEMBERSHIP	☒ MATURITY	☒ PRAYER	☒ MISSIONS
Worship Liturgy Music Drama	Hospital & Hospice AIDS Team Recreation & Fellowship Parish Families Peer Care	Education & Christian Growth Bible Studies Church School	Intercessory Prayer	New Beginnings Stephen's Ministry Campus Ministry Public Realties Evangelism Outreach

All Saints MCC
Friends & Members
Interests and Skills Survey

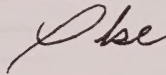
Dear Friends and Members,

In our desire to be more effective in ministering to you, and with you, we are asking that you please complete the following interests survey. Please return the survey to Jon Aiken or Kevin Jackson, or place it in the offering plate on Sunday.

We appreciate your participation in this survey.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Ike

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ike', written in a cursive style.

All Saints MCC
Friends & Members
Interests and Skills Survey

**By-Laws
Of The
UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP
OF
METROPOLITAN
COMMUNITY CHURCHES**



**REVISED AT GENERAL CONFERENCE XVIII
Sydney, Australia
July, 1997**



**Distributed by
ALL SAINTS MCC
ATLANTA, GA**

UFMCC By-Laws and Amendments

(Revised at General Conference XVIII, Sydney, Australia, July 1997)

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UFMCC BYLAWS

(Revised at General Conference XVIII, Sydney, Australia, July 1997)

Article I - Article IV

ARTICLE I

NAME

A. The name of this Fellowship shall be the UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES.

B. Each affiliated local church group will use the name METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH as part of its official title. The group may add either a prefix or suffix to distinguish it from other affiliated local church groups, such as: "Grace Metropolitan Community Church," "Metropolitan Community Church of Tallahassee," "Metropolitan Community Church, Ashland" or "Springfield Metropolitan Community Church."

ARTICLE II

PURPOSE

The objective of this Fellowship shall be:

A. To bind together churches for the purpose of sharing in the worship of God in the Christian tradition, and to make God's will dominant in the lives of all people, individually and collectively, as set forth in the Holy Scriptures.

B. To set up bodies for instruction in theology and in allied subjects for the propagation of the teachings of the Christian faith, as accepted by the General Conference of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.

C. To instruct and encourage those who offer themselves to the teaching and philosophy accepted by this body.

D. To do all things that are compatible with the work of a Christian Church.

ARTICLE III

DOCTRINE, SACRAMENTS AND RITES

A. DOCTRINE: Christianity is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and is the religion set forth in the Scriptures. Jesus Christ is foretold in the Old Testament, presented in the New Testament, and proclaimed by the Christian Church in every age and in every land.

Founded in the interest of offering a church home to all who confess and believe, the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches moves in the mainstream of Christianity.

Our faith is based upon the principles outlined in the historic creeds: Apostles and Nicene.

We believe:

1. In one triune God, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient, of one substance and of three persons: God, - our Parent-Creator; Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God, God in flesh, human; and the Holy Spirit, - God as our Sustainer.

2. That the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God, showing forth God to every person through the law and the prophets, and finally, completely and ultimately on earth in the being of Jesus Christ.

3. That Jesus...the Christ...historically recorded as living some 2,000 years before this writing, is God incarnate, of human birth, fully God and fully human, and that by being one with God, Jesus has demonstrated once and forever that all people are likewise Children of God, being spiritually made in God's image.

4. That the Holy Spirit is God making known God's love and interest to all people. The Holy Spirit is God, available to and working through all who are willing to place their welfare in God's keeping.

5. Every person is justified by grace to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

6. We are saved from loneliness, despair and degradation through God's gift of grace, as was declared by our Savior. Such grace is not earned, but is a pure gift from a God of pure love. We further commend the community of the faithful to a life of prayer; to seek genuine forgiveness for unkind, thoughtless and unloving acts; and to a committed life of Christian service.

7. The Church serves to bring all people to God through Christ. To this end, it shall arrange for regular services of worship, prayer, interpretation of the Scriptures, and edification through the teaching and preaching of the Word.

B. SACRAMENTS: This Church embraces two holy Sacraments:

1. **BAPTISM** by water and the Spirit, as recorded in the Scriptures, shall be a sign of the dedication of each life to God and God's service. Through the words and acts of this sacrament, the recipient is identified as God's own Child.

2. **HOLY COMMUNION** is the partaking of blessed bread and fruit of the vine in accordance with the words of Jesus, our Sovereign: "This is my body...this is my blood." (Matthew 26:26-28). All who believe, confess and repent and seek God's love through Christ, after examining their consciences, may freely participate in the communal meal, signifying their desire to be received into community with Jesus Christ, to be saved by Jesus Christ's sacrifice, to participate in Jesus Christ's resurrection, and to commit their lives anew to the service of Jesus Christ.

C. RITES: The Rites of the Church as performed by its duly authorized ministers shall consist of the following:

1. The **RITE OF ORDINATION** is the setting apart of duly qualified persons for the professional ministry of this Church. It is evidenced by the laying on of hands by authorized ordained clergy, pursuant to these Bylaws.

2. The **RITE OF ATTAINING MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHURCH** shall be conducted by the pastor or pastoral leader before a local congregation at any regular worship service. After completing classes for instruction in the beliefs and doctrines of the Church, a baptized Christian may become a member in good standing of the local church group through a letter of transfer from a recognized Christian body or through affirmation of faith.

3. The **RITE OF HOLY UNION** and the **RITE OF HOLY MATRIMONY** are the spiritual joining of two persons in a manner fitting and proper by a duly authorized clergy of the Church. After both persons have been counseled and apprised of their responsibilities one towards the other, this rite of conferring God's blessing may be performed.

4. The **RITE OF FUNERAL OR MEMORIAL SERVICE** is to be fittingly conducted by the ministers of the Church for the deceased.

5. The **RITE OF LAYING ON OF HANDS** or prayer for the healing of the sick in mind, body or spirit is to be conducted by the ministers of the Church, at their discretion, upon request.

6. The **RITE OF BLESSING** may be conducted by the ministers of the Church for persons, things and relationships, when deemed appropriate by the minister. This includes the dedication of a church building to the glory of God.

ARTICLE IV

MINISTRY

The UFMCC affirms the universal priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:5-10). All members of the Church are called by God to a ministry of the Gospel of Christ in the Church and in the world.

UFMCC decrees that all people shall have equality of access and opportunity which is free from discrimination on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, race, age, physical challenge, HIV status, health status, gender identification, nationality, or economic status in terms of:

- 1] Employment and personnel procedures
- 2] Service delivery -- all that we do.

A. MINISTRY OF THE LAITY

1. The Priesthood of All Believers: Laypeople are the People of God, called by God and authorized by Scripture to respond to the Word, serving as Christ served, to the end that the Church may be edified and the world transformed. UFMCC affirms that this is the ministry of every layperson in this Fellowship.

2. DEACONS: As outlined in the New Testament, their office is an historic ministry of service and aid within the Christian Church.

B. MINISTRY OF THE CLERGY:

1. CLERGY: Clergy are members of the People of God, called by God, authorized and legally recognized by this Fellowship to serve among the people as professional ministers of the Word and Sacraments.

(a) RESPONSIBILITIES: In accordance with their call, clergy shall administer the Rites and Sacraments of this Fellowship and be teachers and preachers of the faith to the end that the world may believe and the Church might be renewed, equipped, and strengthened in its ministry.

(b) QUALIFICATIONS: Clergy are those persons of professed and demonstrated call to be professional Christian ministers who meet the qualifications established by the Steering Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry. These qualifications shall be subject to approval of General Council.

(c) CREDENTIALS: The Chairs of the Board of Ordained Ministry shall meet prior to every General Conference to review the standards and requirements for the clergy of UFMCC. They will make recommendations for changes to the General Council.

Persons who have met the academic standards, completed at least one year of Candidacy with a Teaching Church, and have been approved by the B.O.M. may then be ordained. A person who is ordained cannot function as a UFMCC clergy person until s/he is licensed. A License to Practice shall be immediately issued upon notification of the B.O.M. that the person is entering an active, authorized, and accountable ministry. The License to Practice must be renewed annually by the B.O.M.

(d) DISCIPLINE: The UFMCC will not condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of duty. Procedures for discipline shall be developed by the Steering Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry and approved by a majority vote of the General Council. These procedures shall be included as an addendum to the UFMCC Bylaws.

▼ [Next: UFMCC ByLaws: Article V](#)

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[MAIN MENU](#)

UFMCC BYLAWS

(Revised at General Conference XVIII, Sydney, Australia, July 1997)

Article V

ARTICLE V

GOVERNMENT, ORGANIZATION AND OFFICERS

A. GOVERNMENT:

1. This Fellowship acknowledges the Holy Scriptures interpreted by the Holy Spirit in conscience and faith as its guide in faith, discipline and government.
2. The government of this Fellowship is vested in the General Conference, its District Conferences, Ministry of Global Outreach and Congregational meetings, subject to the provisions of the Fellowship Articles of Incorporation and its Bylaws, or documents of legal organization. The officers elected by the General and District Conferences and Congregational Meetings are subject to the direction and discipline of their respective bodies and are responsible to carry out their policies.
3. When a District desires more flexibility with respect to Articles IV through X of these Bylaws, it can apply to the General Council which may grant that flexibility.
4. This Fellowship is accountable to no outside ecclesiastical jurisdiction, but accepts the obligation of mutual consent and cooperation involved in the free fellowship of other churches, and does pledge itself to share in their common aims and endeavors subject to the expressed approval of its membership.
5. Local Churches, Districts, District Conferences, The Ministry of Global Outreach and the General Conference/World Jubilee as defined by these Bylaws, are set forth for the purposes of Christian fellowship, worship, witness, and service, borne in the cooperation, program development, and implementation of their Bylaws, Standard Operating Procedures, and Policies.
6. A local church of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (hereinafter referred to as UFMCC) is that church which subscribes to the government and doctrine of the UFMCC, and has been authorized by the same.

B. LOCAL COMMISSIONED AND CHARTERED CHURCHES:

1. INTRODUCTION: The government of each of the local churches is vested in its congregational meetings which exert the right to control all of its affairs, subject to the provisions of the UFMCC Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, or documents of legal organization, the General Conference, and its District Conferences. The Pastor and Board of Directors/local church administrative body are authorized to provide spiritual and administrative leadership in the local church.
2. PASTOR: The Pastor is a duly ordained clergy person who has been licensed to practice. Though there are a variety of pastoral roles, in a local congregation the pastor is elected to be responsible for the duties of teacher, preacher, and spiritual leader. If no duly credentialed UFMCC clergy person is available, an Interim Pastoral Leader may be appointed annually by the District Coordinator and the District Committee/Administrator of the Ministry of Global Outreach. All pastors of non-chartered churches must be approved by the District Coordinator and District Committee/Administrator of the Ministry of Global Outreach. All UFMCC churches are led by pastors or interim pastoral leaders.
- (a) QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES: Pastors must be credentialed clergy in the UFMCC. The Pastor of the church shall have the authority for ordering all worship services of the church. The Pastor is a voting member of the Board of Directors/local church administrative body. The Pastor shall serve as the moderator of congregational meetings and the Board of Directors/local church administrative body.
- Associate and/or Assistant Pastor(s) and other personnel, uncompensated or compensated, shall be appointed by the Pastor subject to the approval of the Board of Directors/local church administrative body. The Pastor shall act as personnel director of the local church staff, shall have the authority to delegate such responsibilities and duties as seem wise, and shall, with the approval of the Board of Directors/local church administrative body, determine compensation, vacation periods, and titles of office of the staff.
- (b) CONFLICT RESOLUTION: When there are apparent irreconcilable differences between the Pastor and congregation, the Pastor or the Board of Directors/local church administrative body, may request that a

Ministry of Reconciliation, in accordance with Scripture, be facilitated by the District Coordinator or a person appointed by the District Coordinator. Within twenty-four (24) hours of initiating the request, the District Coordinator and all parties mentioned above must be officially notified by the source of the request. Within ten (10) days of the request, the District Coordinator or the person appointed by the District Coordinator will establish the time-lines and process for the Ministry of Reconciliation, which must be implemented within thirty (30) days of the initial request. If differences cannot be resolved, they may through mutual agreement choose to terminate their relationship. No petition for removal of the Pastor based on irreconcilable differences is valid unless preceded by a Ministry of Reconciliation. Unilateral failure to renew a pastoral contract does not constitute removal of the Pastor from office.

(c) The process of removing the Pastor from office for dis-loyalty, unbecoming conduct, dereliction of duty or when irreconcilable differences arise between Pastor and congregation may be initiated by: a petition submitted to the duly authorized church officer as designated by the local Bylaws/Standard Operating Procedures, or documents of legal organization, and signed by at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the members in good standing; or by a vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the full Board of Directors /local church administrative body. Within three (3) days, the Pastor and the District Coordinator/Coordinator of Global Outreach Area and Ministry of Global Outreach Administrator, must be sent a copy of the completed petition by the designated church officer. After the District Coordinator/Coordinator of Global Outreach Area and designated local church officer have validated the number of members who have signed the petition and the clarity of the petition, the District Coordinator/Coordinator of Global Outreach Area may place the Pastor on inactive status, but the Pastor remains fully compensated until the final action of the congregation. Upon validating the petition they will set the time and place of a special congregational meeting. The date of the meeting shall occur within thirty (30) days of the date the petition is submitted to the designated church officer. The only question to be voted on at the meeting shall be: "Shall the Pastor remain in office?"

The Pastor has the right to appear on their own behalf before the congregational meeting and may have an advocate of their own choice present. The action of the congregation is final. If a special meeting is called to remove a Pastor, the District Coordinator/Coordinator of Global Outreach Area and the UFMCC Board of Elders must be given notice that such action is being taken. The District Coordinator/Coordinator of Global Outreach Area shall attend or send a representative as an impartial observer who shall moderate the meeting. If the Pastor is removed, the Board of Directors/local church administrative body will meet immediately after the meeting with the District Coordinator/ Coordinator of Global Outreach Area or the representative to provide pastoral leadership until the pulpit is filled. The Board of Directors/local church administrative body will confer with the District Coordinator/Coordinator of Global Outreach Area as to available candidates for the office of Pastor.

3. BOARD OF DIRECTORS/LOCAL CHURCH

ADMINISTRATIVE BODY

(a) **TERM OF OFFICE:** The Board of Directors/local church administrative body elected by the local church shall consist of at least four (4) members of the Church who are in good standing, in addition to the Pastor. They shall hold office for a term of from one (1) year to three (3) years as determined by local Bylaws/Standard Operating Procedures with the exception of the Pastor who will hold office for as long as they occupy the pulpit of the church. Board of Directors/local church administrative body members' terms must be staggered. In the event of the resignation, death, or removal of a Board of Directors/local church administrative member, the remaining members of the Board of Directors/local church administrative body should appoint an interim member to serve until the next congregational meeting. At the next congregational meeting an open election shall be held for a replacement for the remainder of the original term.

(b) **DUTIES:** The Board of Directors/local church administrative body shall have charge of all matters pertaining to the Articles of Incorporation or documents of legal organization, church property, and physical and financial affairs of the local church. This Board of Directors/local church administrative body shall have the responsibility for collecting and disbursing funds, keeping adequate church records, and making reports to the congregation and through the District to the UFMCC.

The Board of Directors/local church administrative body shall serve as a pastoral search committee upon the event of a pastoral vacancy. For the purpose of its function as a pastoral search committee, additional voting members may be appointed or elected as appropriate. When they have chosen a suitable qualified candidate or co-pastoral team, they shall present the name to the congregation for approval at a specially called meeting or at the next regular congregation meeting.

Every local church financial account is required to have a minimum of two (2) signatories, who are chosen by the Board of Directors/local church administrative body. Two (2) signatures will be required for any withdrawals. It is incumbent upon the Board of Directors/local church administrative body of each local church to provide that church with a set of Bylaws or Standard Operating Procedures.

(c) **DISCIPLINE:** Local churches of the UFMCC must not condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of duty on the part of any members of the Board of Directors/local church administrative body;

therefore the Board of Directors/local church administrative body may remove by a majority vote of the full Board of Directors/local church administrative body, any of its members guilty of the above, with the exception of the Pastor who must be disciplined in accordance with Article V.B2.c. A petition presented to the Board of Directors/local church administrative body and signed by twenty-five percent (25%) of the members in good standing of the congregation, may also initiate such a procedure. This action of the Board of Directors/local church administrative body may be subject to review by a vote of the congregation at its next regular congregational meeting or at a special meeting which may be called, and must be in accordance with the provisions of the Bylaws of this Fellowship and the Bylaws or Standard Operating Procedures of the local church.

(d) ACCOUNTABILITY: The Board of Directors/local church administrative body shall be subject to these Bylaws, local Articles of Incorporation, and local Bylaws/Standard Operating Procedures, and to the approval or disapproval by action of their local congregation as provided for in any of the above.

4. LAY DELEGATE: Each voting church body shall have one (1) vote for every one hundred (100) members in good standing or portion thereof and shall elect one (1) Lay Delegate for each vote. Each Lay Delegate shall carry one (1) vote. Each Lay Delegate shall be a member in good standing of the congregation that he/she represents, should be elected at the first congregational meeting following each General Conference and shall serve a term of two (2) years. The duties of the Lay Delegate shall include, but not be limited to, representation of the congregation at General and District Conferences and to be informed of the UFMCC concerns and policies.

Each voting church may, in accordance with that local church's Bylaws or Standard Operating Procedures, elect at least one (1) Alternate Lay Delegate for each Lay Delegate elected. The Alternate Delegate(s) so elected shall, in accordance with procedures set forth in the local church Bylaws or Standard Operating Procedures, be empowered to assume the duties of any Lay Delegate who is unable or unwilling to perform the duties of Lay

Delegate, including but not limited to, representation of the congregation at General and District Conferences.

5. DISCIPLINE OF CHURCHES: If any local voting church body shall fail to abide by the Articles of Incorporation of the UFMCC, these Bylaws, or documents of legal organization, or refuses to participate in General or District Conferences, the General Council shall take appropriate action to require compliance and participation. The General Council shall have the authority to withdraw the commission, revoke the charter, or take other appropriate action, and shall report any such action to the District Committee/The Board of Ministry of Global Outreach, and the church involved. The action will also be reported to the next General Conference.

6. CHURCH PROPERTY: The Board of Directors/local church administrative body of the local congregation of the UFMCC will name the Board(s) of Trustees for any property acquired by said churches. The Board of Directors/local church administrative body, and the members of each local congregation will have sole control of said property except under the following circumstances: 1) if the property is abandoned; 2) if the local church is disbanded by the Board of Directors/local church administrative body and the District Committee or Conference, or the General Council; or 3) if the local church disaffiliates from UFMCC. Should any of the above circumstances exist, said property will revert to the use of the General Conference of the UFMCC. The General Council will decide the disposition of said property. In every nation where UFMCC comes to exist a paragraph modeled on the following must be included in their document of legal organization and must apply: "Local churches which are now incorporated in the United States as nonprofit corporations under their state laws are required to name the UFMCC as the successor 501(c)(3) corporation designated to receive the church's property in the event of the dissolution or abandonment of that incorporated local church, or disaffiliation from the UFMCC by the local church."

7. RESERVATION OF POWERS: Any specific matters of congregational approval not covered herein are left to local church option.

C. DISTRICTS:

1. INTRODUCTION: Districts are those defined bodies which are created by the Board of Elders in accordance with these Bylaws. They are called into existence to enable and empower Christian ministry within their jurisdiction through their member congregations and bodies. District Conferences are legislative gatherings of the district for the purpose defined in Article V.A.5. 10

The District Conference is required to establish District Bylaws or Standard Operating Procedures for the nominations and election of members of the District Committee, all District Officers, and for the conducting of District business. The District Bylaws/Standard Operating Procedures must be in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of UFMCC.

(a) CRITERIA: The following are criteria for establishing District boundaries.

i. Districts may be international in their composition.

ii. Districts need to have sufficient financial support both (a) to attract and ensure qualified and experienced full-time leadership that can promote growth and (b) to provide resources to the local churches.

iii. Districts need to have a sufficient number of existing churches that are willing and able to assist in promoting growth and ministry in a District. Such churches are those with stable, effective pastoral leadership, strong lay leadership and ministry programs; and a sufficient financial and membership base to replicate leadership and support the nurture of new churches under the authority of the District.

iv. Priority for District budgets shall be to provide for a full-time District Coordinator, sufficient administrative support, and sufficient funding to allow for travel by District officers, including meetings of the District Committee.

(b) GEOGRAPHIC REVIEW BOARD: The Geographic Review Board will be comprised of three members appointed by the Board of Elders and approved by the General Council.

(c) CHANGES TO DISTRICT BOUNDARIES: The following process shall be followed to effect any change in District Boundaries:

i. Requests for District boundary changes may be initiated and reviewed by a District, two or more Districts, the General Council or the Board of Elders.

ii. The Geographic Review Board will facilitate and service the process regarding any District boundary change.

iii. The Geographic Review Board may recommend additional criteria by which District boundaries are set and criteria by which District boundaries are re-evaluated.

iv. The Geographic Review Board shall facilitate a process to receive input from and consultation with Districts effected by any proposed boundary change.

v. Recommendations of the Geographic Review Board for changes in District boundaries will be submitted to the Board of Elders for approval following consultation with the General Council.

2. DISTRICT COMMITTEE: The District Committee is that body elected by the District Conference to carry on the administrative affairs of the District between District Conferences in an orderly manner. It shall have charge of all matters pertaining to Articles of Incorporation, all documents of legal organization, property, and finances of the District. All actions of the District Committee must be reported to and approved by the District Conference, except where specifically provided for in these Bylaws. This committee shall consist of at least three (3) members, as the District Conference may determine from time to time, including the District Coordinator and members representative of clergy and laity.

(a) QUALIFICATIONS/REQUIREMENTS: Members of the District Committee must be members in good standing within the Fellowship, of obvious spiritual quality and leadership who are mature, have sound judgement and a proven record of accomplishment. Their term of office shall be two years, except that of the District Coordinator.

(b) DUTIES: It is the responsibility of the District Committee to propose a budget to the District Conference each year; to implement such a budget when adopted; to establish a procedure for formulating and distributing a tentative agenda for each District Conference, the agenda to be mailed to all delegates, District Officers, and congregations at least thirty (30) days prior to Conference; to establish and make appointments to committees and task forces of the District; to carry out the directives of the District Conference and of the General Conference as appropriate. It is also the responsibility of the District Committee to foster growth and development of new works within the District and to act upon petitions for commissioning and chartering according to the procedures established by the District Conference. The District Committee will name the Board(s) of Trustees for any property acquired by the District. All persons serving in elective office of the District Committee may have, at District option, both voice and vote at District Conferences.

(c) DISCIPLINE: The UFMCC cannot condone disloyalty or unbecoming conduct or dereliction of duty on the part of District Officers or members of the District Committee. Therefore the District Committee or District Officers may remove, by majority vote of the full Committee or Officers, any member(s) guilty of the above. Any member of the District Committee or a District Officer may be removed from office by the District Conference. When the District Conference is not in session, charges in writing against a District Officer or member of the District Committee, must be sent at the same time to the person charged and the General Council, who may suspend the officer or member of the District Committee so charged until the next District Conference which shall hear and act upon the charges without appeal.

The written charges must be signed by a minimum of one credentialed clergy from each of fifty percent

(50%) of the churches or ten (10) churches within the District (whichever is less); and/or by the lay delegates representing a majority of lay delegate votes of each of fifty percent (50%) of the churches or ten (10) churches within the District (whichever is less). The process may be initiated by either clergy or lay.

3. DISTRICT OFFICERS:

(a) DISTRICT COORDINATOR:

1. **MINISTRY:** The District Coordinator shall be elected by the District Conference for a term of four (4) years and shall serve as a member of the General Council. The District shall be responsible for compensation to its District Coordinator.

2. **REQUIREMENTS:** It shall be the duty of the District Coordinator to provide spiritual direction and guidance; to act as Moderator at all District Conferences; to represent the interests and perspectives of the District to the General Council; to represent the General Council within the District; to coordinate and administer the work of the District in achieving its purposes; and to assure, together with the District Committee, that every church within the District is supplied with a Pastor or other pastoral leadership. It shall be the right and duty of the District Coordinator, or any representative whom the District Coordinator may delegate, to visit all churches within the District. The District Coordinator shall also serve as the Chair of the District Committee.

3. **QUALIFICATIONS:** District Coordinators are those persons of professed and demonstrated call to be professional Christian leaders who possess at least three years experience in the UFMCC and three years experience in successful organizational leadership and have the skills to work with local church and other district leadership.

(b) **OTHER DISTRICT OFFICERS:** In addition to the District Coordinator, as specified above, the District shall provide for at least the following officers:

1. **ASSISTANT DISTRICT COORDINATOR:** A District Conference shall elect at least one Assistant District Coordinator to assume the Chair at meetings of the District Conference or District Committee in the absence of the District Coordinator, or at the District Coordinator's request. Where multiple persons share this title, the District Bylaws and Standard Operating Procedures must specify the primary and secondary position of these officers in respect to assuming the duties of the District Coordinator. The Assistant District Coordinator shall perform other duties as deemed appropriate by the District Coordinator and/or the District Committee.

2. **DISTRICT CLERK/SECRETARY:** The District Clerk/Secretary shall be responsible for recording the minutes of District business meetings; for publishing and disseminating to clergy and lay delegates, District Officers and congregations tentative minutes of each District business meeting within thirty (30) days; for keeping orderly files of approved minutes and pertinent materials.

3. **DISTRICT TREASURER:** The District Treasurer shall be responsible for the receipt and safekeeping of all funds of the District and those funds for which the District is responsible. The Treasurer shall be responsible for keeping accurate financial records and disbursing funds in accordance with procedures approved by the District Committee. The Treasurer shall prepare the quarterly financial statement, a copy of which shall be sent to all District congregations, clergy and lay delegates, District Officers, and the General Council. The Treasurer shall present a financial report at each District Conference.

4. **DISTRICT LAY REPRESENTATIVE:** The District Lay Representative shall be elected by a majority of the lay delegates at the District Conference immediately following the General Conference. Once elected, the District Lay Representative shall be a member of the District Commission on the Laity, represent the District on the UFMCC Commission on the Laity, and shall encourage an annual visit to every church within the District by a representative of the laity in accordance with the District Bylaws/Standard Operating Procedures.

(c) **DISCIPLINE:** Discipline of District Officers shall be in accordance with the provisions of Article V.C.2.c.

4. **RESERVATION OF POWERS:** Any specific matters of District approval or appeal not covered herein are left to District option.

D. FELLOWSHIP:

1. **INTRODUCTION:** Internationally, the government of the UFMCC is vested in the General Conference, subject to the provisions of the Fellowship Articles of Incorporation, its Bylaws, or documents of legal organization. Between General Conferences, the Board of Elders and the General Council are those bodies which are authorized to provide spiritual and administrative leadership on the International Fellowship level.

2. **BOARD OF ELDERS:** The Board of Elders of the UFMCC is that body authorized by the General Conference to serve in a pastoral role and direct the spiritual life of the Fellowship. This Board shall consist of

seven (7) members, which shall be expanded to nine (9) members by the General Conference once the number of Chartered Churches reaches one hundred (100).

For every fifty (50) additional Chartered Churches beyond one hundred (100), the General Conference shall expand the Board by one (1) additional member until a total of twelve (12) is reached. It is desirable that the General Conference shall elect members of the Board of Elders so that this Board is representative of the diversity of the Fellowship.

(a) **QUALIFICATIONS:** Elders must be those individuals of obvious spiritual quality and leadership who are mature and have sound judgement and a proven record of accomplishment as members within the Fellowship.

(b) **REQUIREMENTS:** At General Council meetings immediately following General Conference, the Board of Elders, subject to General Council approval, will appoint the Elders' Nominating Committee which will consist of the Chair, and one Clergyperson and one Lay person. This committee shall receive and review any and all nominations for the position of Elder. This committee will then present to the General Conference qualified nominees for the purpose of filling the position available. Nominations from the floor of General Conference will not be accepted. The Nominations Committee shall make its report at the first business meeting of General Conference. The election shall be held no less than two (2) days after the nominations. The term of office for a member of the Board of Elders will be four (4) years; except for The Reverend Elder Troy D. Perry, whose term on the Board of Elders extends for the duration of his life, unless he chooses to resign or is removed according to Article V.D.2.d.

(c) **DUTIES:** The primary responsibility of the Board of Elders shall be to give pastoral leadership and care to enable the Fellowship in our spiritual journey. This shall include the areas of evangelism, ecumenism, and church visitation. The Elders will serve as official representatives of the Fellowship in the areas of public and community relations. It is the responsibility of the Board of Elders, except where specifically provided for in these Bylaws, to make appointments to the various Fellowship boards, commissions, committees and institutions, subject to the approval of the General Council. The Moderator, elected by and from the Board of Elders, is the chief corporate officer of the Fellowship and shall preside over the General Conference and the General Council. A Vice Moderator, Clerk, and Treasurer shall also be elected by and from the Board, and shall serve in those capacities on the General Council. In the case of a vacancy among the Board of Elders occurring between General Conferences, the Board of Elders shall appoint to the position a person who meets the above qualifications subject to confirmation of the General Council. An election for the remainder of the uncompleted term of Elder shall be conducted at the next General Conference.

(d) **DISCIPLINE:** The UFMCC cannot condone disloyalty, unbecoming conduct, or dereliction of duty on the part of its Elders and, therefore, makes the following provisions for discipline or removal:

All charges against an Elder must be submitted to the Board of Elders in written form signed by a minimum of one (1) member of the clergy from each of ten (10) different churches and by the lay delegates representing the majority of the lay delegate votes from each of ten (10) different churches, and may be initiated by either the clergy or lay delegates. The Elder must be given written notice of the charges, and at that time becomes inactive and if salaried, remains fully compensated until final disposition of these charges. The Elder has the right to appear and present their own defense before the Board of Elders on their own behalf. The Board of Elders will then review the charges, and, upon majority vote of the full Board, may remove the Elder or take other such action as it may deem appropriate. The only appeal from the decision of the Board of Elders will be to the General Conference of the Fellowship, and written notice of such appeal must be filed with the Clerk of the Board of Elders within thirty (30) days.

3. **GENERAL COUNCIL:** The General Council of the UFMCC is that body authorized by the General Conference to carry on the administrative affairs of the UFMCC between General Conferences in an orderly manner and is composed of the Board of Elders and all District Coordinators. One individual will not serve simultaneously as an Elder and District Coordinator. If the District Coordinator is unable to attend, an Assistant District Coordinator may represent the District. The General Council shall have charge of all matters pertaining to Articles of Incorporation, all documents of legal organization, property, and finances of the UFMCC.

(a) **DUTIES:** It shall be the responsibility of the General Council to approve the establishment of and the appointment to the various Fellowship boards, commissions, committees, and institutions. The General Council is also empowered to collect and disburse funds for the advancement and growth of the UFMCC. In addition, the Council is charged to carry out all directives of the General Conference. All actions of this Council must be reported to, and approved by the General Conference except where specifically provided for in these Bylaws. When church bodies or members of the Fellowship raise a question of interpretation of the Bylaws by official action the General Council as an administrative body of the Fellowship is authorized to issue an advisory interpretation of the Bylaws for that situation.

(b) **DISCIPLINE:** The discipline for members of the General Council is the same as defined for Elders in Article V.D.2.d. and for District Coordinators in Article V.C.2.c.

4. MINISTRY OF GLOBAL OUTREACH:

(a) Purpose: The challenge of The Ministry of Global Outreach is to share the liberating Gospel of Jesus Christ to people of all races and in all countries. WE are to be respectful of cultural differences as we present the vision of UFMCC through media, literature, and visitation. The mission of the Ministry of Global Outreach is the establishment of indigenous, self-supporting, self-propagating UFMCC congregations which in turn fully participate in the witness and ministry of the church, local and universal.

(b) Ministry of Global Outreach: The Board of Ministry of Global Outreach shall be appointed by the Board of Elders and approved by the General Council.

(c) Global Outreach Administrator: The Global Outreach Administrator is appointed by the Board of Elders and approved by the General Council. The Global Outreach Administrator is responsible for the management of the UFMCC policy and program of the Ministry of Global Outreach.

(d) Coordinators of Global Outreach Areas: The Coordinators of Global Outreach Areas oversee geographical areas and jurisdictions according to procedures specified in the Ministry of Global Outreach policy. They are appointed by the Board of Elders, accountable to the Board of Ministry of Global Outreach and are supervised by the Global Outreach Administrator.

(e) Approval of Church Bodies: When sufficient interest and support exist, the Board of Ministry of Global Outreach may approve church bodies in accordance with Article VI. In these Bylaws, and Global Outreach policy.

(f) UFMCC Participation: A church within a Global Outreach area or jurisdiction may designate any elected lay delegate to vote by proxy at the General Conference in accordance with provisions determined by the Board of Ministry of Global Outreach. Representation to UFMCC commissions, boards and committees or task forces shall be by appointment of the Global Outreach Administrator, subject to the approval of the General Council.

(g) Approval of Districts: When sufficient criteria as established by the Board of Elders are met, church bodies within a geographic area and jurisdiction may petition the Board of Ministry of Global Outreach to become a District. The Board of Ministry of Global Outreach will then forward such petition and its recommendation to the Board of Elders for consideration.

(h) Finances: Tithes, assessments and other funds from churches within a Global Outreach area or jurisdiction shall be maintained in an account within the national boundaries of those churches, and managed in compliance with national laws. Such funds shall be under the direction of the Global Outreach Area Coordinator, subject to the approval of the Global Outreach Administrator and the Board of Ministry of Global Outreach. Funds remitted to the Fellowship for Global Outreach shall be under the jurisdiction of the Global Outreach Administrator and the Board of Ministry of Global Outreach.

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UFMCC BYLAWS

(Revised at General Conference XVIII, Sydney, Australia, July 1997)

Article VI - Article VIII

ARTICLE VI

NEW AND SPECIAL WORKS, AND VOTING CHURCH BODIES

A. INTRODUCTION:

1. Within the UFMCC, all church bodies are referred to as Churches.
2. The District Committee/Board of Ministry of Global Outreach shall establish procedures and standards for admission of new works, commissioning and chartering of Churches, subject to the approval of the General Council and the District Conference.
3. The District Committee/Board of Ministry of Global Outreach commissions and is responsible for special works within their jurisdiction.

B. VOTING CHURCH BODIES:

1. **COMMISSIONED CHURCHES:** In order for a new work to be commissioned by the UFMCC, the new work must, by petition to the appropriate District or Board of Ministry of Global Outreach, show a pledged commitment to: 1) uphold the Statement of Faith and the Bylaws of the UFMCC; 2) actively support the work of the Church over the next year; 3) provide adequate financial support to carry out the work of the Church over the next year; and 4) insure that those people signing the petition have a record of attendance at organizational meetings. The petition, to be submitted to the District Coordinator/Coordinator of Global Outreach must provide a list of stated goals of the local church for the next year in inclusivity, worship, congregational care, evangelism, education, and stewardship. When the District Committee/Board of Ministry of Global Outreach finds that the petition pledges an acceptable level of commitment and support, the District Committee/Board of Ministry of Global Outreach may commission the Church for a period of up to one (1) year, renewable by the District Committee/Board of Ministry of Global Outreach. Successive annual petitions for renewal should give evidence of continued growth and progress toward chartering.
2. **CHARTERED CHURCHES:** When a commissioned Church has a stable membership which demonstrates: 1) a pledged commitment to uphold the Statement of Faith and the Bylaws of the UFMCC; 2) a willingness and ability to support a full time Pastor; 3) a willingness to provide to the limit of its ability for the expenses of its Pastor and lay delegate(s) to District and General Conferences, and 4) plans for continuing work and growth in the areas of inclusivity, worship, congregational care, evangelism, education, and stewardship, the District Committee/Board of Ministry of Global Outreach shall review the Church's petition and records and may request the General Council to issue a charter. Any exception to the support of Pastor/lay delegate expenses must be approved in advance by the District Committee/Board of Ministry of Global Outreach. They may recommend further action by the Church before recommending a charter. If the District Committee/Board of Ministry of Global Outreach recommends a charter, it shall also recommend an effective date of that charter. Each District Committee may establish procedures for it to review all charters within its District at least once every five (5) years, and may develop standards by which charters within its District may be maintained. The Board of Ministry of Global Outreach may review all charters within the Global Outreach areas at least once every five (5) years, and may develop standards by which charters in the Global Outreach areas may be maintained.

ARTICLE VII

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

[Provisions for Membership in this church are defined in Article III. Section C of these Bylaws.]

A. MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING: At least once a year the Board of Directors/local church administrative body of a Church shall review the entire membership. Any member who does not have registered attendance, identified financial support, definite service contribution, and demonstrated interest and loyalty within the preceding period of six (6) months to one (1) year may be removed from the roll of members in good standing and placed on a list of inactive members. At that time the Board of Directors/local church administrative body of the Church shall notify this member in writing that the member has been placed on such a list and is not eligible to vote at any business meeting of the Church. After notification if the member has not demonstrated further interest or loyalty for a period of two (2) months immediately

following, the Board of Directors/local church administrative body of the Church shall have the authority, at their discretion, to drop any such member from the local church roll of members in good standing. The member may be restored to the roll of members in good standing of the congregation by a vote of the Board of Directors/local church administrative body of the church without a public reception into membership.

B. FRIENDS OF THE CHURCH: A local church body may, if it desires, accept into the Church person(s) who, for one reason or another, feel that they cannot become regular members of the Church but who support the goals of the Church and want to be part of the work of the church. Such people shall be designated as "Friends of the Church." Friends may serve on appointed committees and may participate in all activities of the Church. Friends may not, however, serve on the Board of Directors/local church administrative body and may not vote at congregational meetings. Friends shall not be considered in determining the number of lay delegates which a local church body may send to meetings of the General Conference of the Fellowship or District Conferences.

C. DISCIPLINE: The UFMCC cannot condone disloyalty or unbecoming conduct on the part of any of its members and friends; therefore, the Board of Directors/local church administrative body of the church is empowered to remove by majority vote any member or friend from the rolls of the church or take such appropriate disciplinary action as it deems necessary. Upon written request of the member or friend, the action of the Board of Directors/local church administrative body may be subject to review by vote of the congregation at its next regular business meeting or at a special meeting which may be called and must be in accordance with the provisions of the Bylaws of the Fellowship and of the local church. Until the vote on appeal, the disciplined member will retain membership, or a disciplined friend will retain "friend" status.

ARTICLE VIII

CHURCH SERVICES

A. Each local church body shall hold services of public worship every Sunday. Other worship services may be held as determined by the Pastor with the approval of the local Board of Directors/local church administrative body. In regard to the worship services of local church bodies, the Sacrament of Holy Communion shall be offered each Sunday as well as at other worship services at the discretion of the Pastor. Holy Baptism may be administered at any appropriate service of the local church body - or at any other time - at the Pastor's discretion.

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UFMCC BYLAWS

(Revised at General Conference XVIII, Sydney, Australia, July 1997)

Article IX - Article XII

ARTICLE IX

CHURCH MEETINGS

A. FELLOWSHIP: For the purpose of the transaction of business the UFMCC will hold a Biennial General Conference beginning in 1977. A World Jubilee will be held in conjunction with General Conference for the purpose of worship, celebration, education and training. Meetings of regional/country groups will be held as part of the Jubilee.

The time and place of the World Jubilee/General Conference will be announced at the previous World Jubilee/General Conference. Notice must be given in writing to all Church bodies ninety (90) days prior to the upcoming General Conference. This General Conference of the UFMCC is that body consisting of credentialed clergy (active, on sabbatical, and retired) Elders, District Coordinators, lay delegates, and the Pastor of each chartered and commissioned Church. The transaction of all business except procedural matters must be approved by a separate majority vote of the votes carried by lay delegates, Interim Pastoral Leaders, lay Elders, lay District Coordinators and lay Coordinators of Global Outreach Area and the chair of the Commission on the Laity; and a separate majority vote of the credentialed clergy. A quorum shall consist of the number of lay people required to achieve fifty-five percent (55%) of the total number of lay people eligible to vote at General Conference from within the UFMCC (inclusive of lay Elders, lay District Coordinators, and Interim Pastoral Leaders), and fifty-five percent (55%) of the credentialed clergy of the UFMCC eligible to vote. No proxy and/or absentee ballots shall be allowed in any business meeting of this Fellowship, except where specifically provided for in these Bylaws. All special General Conferences of the UFMCC can be called by a petition submitted to the Board of Elders by fifty percent (50%) of all those persons eligible to vote at General Conference. Initiation of this petition may be by either clergy or laity. Such special conferences shall be governed by the same rules as those pertaining to the General Conference with the exception that written notice must be sent to all credentialed clergy and to all voting church bodies at least thirty (30) days prior to the special conference. The nature and purpose of special conferences must be stated in the petition and notices and must be written into the agenda of the special conference.

B. DISTRICTS: Between World Jubilee/General Conferences, District Conferences must be held at least once, but no more than twice, yearly. A District Conference is that legislative meeting of all church bodies within the boundaries of the District. The boundaries of the District are established by the Board of Elders. Thirty (30) days written notice of any District Conference must be sent to all church bodies within the District. Voting rights at these conferences shall be determined in the same manner as for the General Conference unless additional voting rights are granted by the District Conference. A District Conference quorum shall consist of fifty-five (55%) percent of all UFMCC credentialed clergy eligible to vote and fifty-five (55%) percent of all laity eligible to vote at a District Conference as per Article IX.A. Special conferences of the various Districts of the UFMCC can be called by petition submitted to the District Coordinator by fifty percent (50%) of the credentialed clergy within the District eligible to vote at a District Conference and by fifty percent (50%) of the lay people within the District eligible to vote at a District Conference.

The process may be initiated by either the clergy or the laity. Such special conferences shall be governed by the same rules as those pertaining to the regularly scheduled District Conferences. The nature and purpose of special conferences must be stated in the petition and notices and the agenda must be limited to the purpose. Special conferences may also be called at the District level or by other means as provided for in the District's Bylaws or Standard Operating Procedures.

C. LOCAL: Each local church body of the UFMCC must hold an annual congregational business meeting, preferably during the same month each year. In order to transact business no less than twenty percent (20%) of the members in good standing must be present. Congregations of 250 or more members in good standing may elect the option of a percentage of less than 20% but no less than 10% to replace the twenty percent figure in the previous sentence. Two weeks notice must be given in writing to all members.

All special meetings of local church bodies can be called by a petition submitted to the Moderator or other Officer of the Board of Directors/local church administrative body. This petition must be signed by twenty-five percent (25%) of the members listed on the roll of members in good standing of the local body. Congregations of 250 or more members in good standing may elect the option of a percentage of less than 25% but no less than 15% to replace the 25% figure in the previous sentence. The required minimum percentage of signatures of members in good standing may be adjusted by the General Council when the laws of a local jurisdiction require a variance. Such special meetings shall be governed by the same rules as those

pertaining to the congregational meeting. The nature and purpose of the special meeting must be stated in the petition and notices and must be written into the agenda of the special meeting. Special meetings of the local church body may be called by other means as provided for in the local Bylaws.

ARTICLE X

CHURCH FINANCES

A. The UFMCC adopts and teaches tithing as the scripturally affirmed means of supporting the Church and its ministries, and as the expression of good stewardship of time, skills, and money by individuals and church bodies. Therefore, it shall be the responsibility of both the clergy and the lay leadership of local churches to plan and implement programs of stewardship both to help persons grow in the grace of giving and to fund the Church's ministries. An offering shall be received at each service of public worship in the local church, District Conference, and World Jubilee.

B. The Board of Directors/local church administrative body shall report all Church receipts each month to the UFMCC and the District, and with that report shall remit five percent (5%) of the funds reported to the District and ten percent (10%) of the funds reported to the UFMCC. Only bequests, building funds, or funds to meet the immediate needs of persons in distress or funds raised or designated for mandated UFMCC/District Conferences shall be omitted in calculating the amount due the Fellowship and District. Funds to meet the immediate needs of persons in distress shall be to cover direct services, i.e., services without which the recipient would be destitute or in personal danger, but is not limited to emergency food, clothing and shelter. The administrative costs of direct services predicated upon ministries operating within the existing ministry structure of the local church, are borne by the local church through its titheable income. Building fund is a fund (preferably in a separate bank account from other church monies) designated for the current or future construction or purchase of a church facility, which may or may not include meeting space, office space(s), kitchen facilities, classroom space, and non-revenue parking facilities in addition to the primary structure provided for worship. The building fund includes capital expenditures and may include the purchase of furniture and equipment for the space constructed or purchased, as well as any renovation costs. Monies, in addition to mortgage payments, raised to be applied to reduce the principal on a building loan are considered building fund. Operational costs such as mortgage interest payments (after the time the building is occupied by the congregation), rent payments, utilities and minor equipment are not included under the definition of "building fund". Building fund monies, including interest, are directed toward the purposes outlined above, and may not be transferred permanently or long-term into other Church accounts unless the assessments stated in UFMCC Bylaws are remitted to the appropriate bodies. A gift of money given in lieu of goods in kind to a Church outside of the United States would not be included in funds to be reported. Report and remittance are due on or before the tenth (10th) day of the month following the month being reported.

Wherever possible and desirable as determined by the General Council, Churches in Districts outside the United States shall send their ten percent (10%) tithe directly to the UFMCC headquarters. However the General Council may choose, in certain circumstances, to authorize special accounts in other nations to hold in trust the ten percent (10%) UFMCC tithe within that nation. The General Council upon the recommendation of the District Coordinator will name the signators on said accounts and will approve a budget for use of those monies for UFMCC purposes and programs within the respective nation. Of the funds held in trust in the respective nation, a mutually agreed upon amount will be billed annually to Fellowship Headquarters to contribute toward denominational operations. Also, any funds not expended for Fellowship purposes in programs in respective nations shall, at the end of each biennium, be remitted to UFMCC headquarters. For each such remittance, UFMCC fellowship offices shall provide documentation satisfactory to national/regional government authorities in the sending countries.

C. Each Board of Directors/local church administrative body in the USA shall report quarterly the number of members in good standing for each month within every quarter and shall remit the Board of Pensions assessment as set by General Conference. Report and remittance are due to the Board of Pensions on or before the tenth (10th) day of the month following the quarter reported.

D. Any bank or financial account in the name of any church body, District, or of the UFMCC, or of any subordinate group or body, must require two signatures for withdrawals, one of which must be that of an officer elected or a person appointed under UFMCC Bylaws.

ARTICLE XI

RESERVATION OF POWERS

A. All powers not delegated by these Bylaws are reserved to the local church bodies.

ARTICLE XII

ARTICLE XII

ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS

A. ADOPTION: These Bylaws shall become effective immediately upon adoption by the General Conference of the UFMCC and shall become binding upon all members and church bodies within the Fellowship.

B. AMENDMENTS: These Bylaws may be amended or repealed at any duly convened meeting of the General Conference according to the procedures adopted by the General Conference. Such amendments or repeals as presented by the Bylaws Committee can only be effective if two-thirds (2/3) of the duly authorized lay delegates and two-thirds (2/3) of the duly authorized clergy attending vote in favor of such amendments or repeals.

C. COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL LAWS: If UFMCC Bylaws are inconsistent with laws of any nation or other jurisdiction in which a local church body or a District is organized, the General Council may allow the Bylaws or other organizational documents to contain variances with these Bylaws to facilitate compliance of the local church body with such laws.

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MAIN MENU

UFMCC BYLAWS

(Revised at General Conference XVIII, Sydney, Australia, July 1997)

Addendum I - Addendum II

Addendum 1

PROCEDURES FOR SUBMITTING BYLAWS PROPOSALS

Each Bylaws proposal submitted to the Bylaws Committee shall be on separate sheet(s) of paper.

All Bylaws proposals submitted to the bylaws Committee must be sponsored by the Board of Elders, General Council or a minimum of 33% of the District Conferences. Once the Bylaws proposal is submitted to the Bylaws Committee the Bylaws proposal accompanied by a written opinion from the General Council will be placed on the agenda of the next General Conference.

Per General Council action, all Bylaws change proposals must be submitted on the "Standard Bylaws Proposal Submission Form". This form may be obtained from the UFMCC Headquarters Office.

All Bylaws proposals meeting the above requirements can be submitted to:

Chairperson/Bylaws Committee

c/o UFMCC 8704 Santa Monica Blvd., 2nd Floor West Hollywood, California 90069 USA

Addendum II

JUDICIARY PROCESS

The Judicial process begins when charges are brought as defined in the Bylaws (Article IV, paragraph B.1.(d).)

I. THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE:

For each District, the Chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) in consultation with the District Coordinator will appoint a Judiciary Representative to serve a three year term. This person must be an ordained UFMCC clergyperson. This appointment must be approved by the District Committee. Each time the Representative receives charges she/he will appoint two additional persons to form a Judiciary Committee. These persons must be members in good standing of UFMCC. In the event that the Representative is unable to serve or has a conflict of interest, the BOM will appoint an alternate Representative.

II. COMPLAINTS/CHARGES:

A. COMPLAINTS: A distinction should be made between complaints and charges. Any church official (Clergy, Lay Delegate, Board of Directors, District Officers, etc.) who receives a complaint of alleged misconduct by a UFMCC clergyperson shall report the complaint to the Chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) within 24 hours. A preliminary investigation will be conducted by a member of the BOM, appointed by the Chair, within five (5) business days. Said period of time may be extended with the written consent of the complainant, not to exceed an additional 5 business days. If a member of the BOM is not available or if, in the judgment of the Chair of the BOM, particular skills and/or expertise are needed to appropriately conduct the preliminary investigation, such other person, with no vested interest in the proceedings, may be appointed. The BOM Chair may not serve as the investigator in a judicial inquiry. The investigator's report will be forwarded to the Chair of the BOM. If the Chair of the BOM determines that the complaint is not substantiated, a record of the finding will be placed in the clergyperson's file to identify possible patterns of misconduct. the clergyperson, the complainant, the District Coordinator/Administrator of Global Outreach of the complainant and of the clergy person, the Moderator of the Board of Elders, and the Director of Clergy Development shall be kept fully informed throughout the Judiciary process.

B. CHARGES: If the Chair of the BOM determines that the complaint has been substantiated, within 24 hours of receiving the report of the investigator, she/he shall submit charges on behalf of the complainant and a complete record of her/his findings to the Judiciary Representative. The clergyperson charged and the affected church/agency will be immediately notified by the Chair of the BOM by sending them a copy of the charges. Throughout the process, all parties will be kept fully informed concerning the proceedings and the resolution. The clergyperson may be placed on inactive status by the BOM and she/he shall cease to function as a clergyperson until a final judgment is reached. The clergy person charged must be placed on inactive status immediately if the allegations indicate the possibility of injury to persons or property. The clergyperson shall

continue to receive all compensation, insurance, and other financial benefits until a final judgement is reached.

III. THE HEARING:

The Judiciary Representative will convene a hearing in the district in which the charges are brought against the clergy person within 45 days from the date of receiving the charges. The Chair of the BOM is not required to be present at the judiciary hearing. Further investigation may be conducted during this interval. Professional investigators may be used if deemed necessary by the Judiciary Representative. The hearing shall be conducted according to the following guidelines:

- A. The location of the hearing shall be in the district in which the charges are brought against a clergyperson.
- B. Both the complainant and the person being charged shall be permitted to have an advocate present at the hearing. Advocates are not legal counsel but are present to provide support and may speak on behalf of the person they represent.
- C. Prior to the commencement of the hearing, written material must be submitted no later than ten (10) business days prior to the hearing. Both parties shall have the opportunity to examine all documentation submitted. Both parties may present and have an opportunity to question witnesses. Only first-hand information is acceptable.
- D. If the clergyperson who has been charged with a violation of the Code of Conduct does not attend the Judiciary hearing, the evidence shall be considered by the Judiciary Committee and a decision rendered.
- E. A complete and accurate record of the proceedings shall be kept.
- F. A copy of the Judiciary committee's written decision shall be sent to both parties by certified mail within five (5) business days.
- G. A unanimous decision is required in order to determine that the charges are valid.

IV. RESOLUTION:

Following a unanimous decision of the Judiciary Committee, the following actions shall be taken.

- A. The Chair of the BOM shall be informed of the Judiciary Committee's decision. In the event that the charges have been substantiated, the Judiciary Committee shall determine the penalty and inform the BOM who shall invoke that penalty immediately.
- B. The Judiciary Committee should appropriately publicize the results of the hearing. Upon conclusion of the hearing and appeals process, the same Boards of Directors should be immediately provided with a brief written statement approved by legal counsel which can be read only to members of the congregation(s) and with a more detailed confidential summary of the decision pursuant to the provisions of the confidentiality agreement which would be available only to the Board of Directors.
- C. Records of the hearing and all evidence will be retained by the BOM and a copy of the charges and final decision will be placed in the clergyperson's file.
- D. Appropriate pastoral care should be offered to all parties involved.

V. APPEAL PROCESS:

Either the complainant or the person charged may appeal the decision of the Judiciary Committee. Appeals must be made to the Chair of the BOM within seven (7) days. Three impartial members of the BOM shall be selected by the Chair to hear the appeal. Their decision must be determined within seven (7) days and their judgement shall be final. Copies of their decision will be sent to the complainant, the person charged, and a copy placed in the file of the person charged.

VI. COSTS OF THE JUDICIAL PROCESS:

The costs of the judicial process shall be the responsibility of the District. The costs of bringing charges shall be borne by the complainant. The costs for defense shall be the responsibility of the person against whom the charges were brought. However, the District reserves the right to seek restitution for expenses should the charges be found frivolous or malicious.

If either party is financially unable to bear the costs of the process a request for assistance may be made to the Treasurer of the district in which the clergyperson resides, who, with the District Coordinator/Administrator of Global Outreach, will make a decision.

Standard Operating Procedures For All Saints MCC

Reverend Ike Parker
Senior Pastor

2352 Bolton Road., NW
Atlanta, GA 30318-1232
(404) 296-9822

Print Date: March, 2001

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES
All Saints Metropolitan Community Church
of Atlanta, GA.

ARTICLE 1: WORSHIP SERVICES

- A. A worship service shall be held each Sunday.
- B. Special worship services shall be determined by the Senior Pastor and announced at least three (3) weeks in advance.

ARTICLE II: SPECIAL OFFERINGS

- A. Special offerings shall be at the discretion of the Senior Pastor and the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE II: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- A. A written agenda and copies of all written reports shall be published and distributed on the Sunday prior to all scheduled Board Meetings, to all Board members. A copy of the agenda shall be posted in a conspicuous place for the congregation.
- B. Any item placed on the agenda must be submitted to the Senior Pastor no later than the last Sunday of the month prior to the monthly Board of Directors Meeting.
- C. The Board of Directors reserves the right to add an item to the agenda during a scheduled meeting with the approval of the majority of the Board members **present prior to the acceptance of the agenda.**
- D. Attendees at any Board Meeting shall be permitted to speak to any issue by the moderator.
- E. Barring mitigating circumstances, Board Meetings shall be contained to three hours or less.
- F. Board meetings shall be held monthly during the same week and time as determined by a majority of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE IV: ALL OTHER CHURCH MEETINGS

- A. Barring unforeseen circumstances, all other church meetings within All Saints Metropolitan Community Church shall be scheduled and announced at least two (2) weeks in advance of the meeting date.
- B. The person in charge of the group meetings shall be responsible for the following duties BEFORE announcing the meeting:
 - 1. Scheduling the meeting place with the proper parties of any leased, owned, or personal space.
 - 2. Advising the Church Administrative Assistant of the meeting date to ensure no conflict with other church activities; and

1 **ARTICLE IV: ALL OTHER CHURCH MEETINGS- continued:**

- 2 3. Arranging for the notification of all individuals know to have expressed interest
- 3 in the meeting as well as to the congregation as a whole.
- 4 4. The person in charge of the group meeting shall then be responsible for the
- 5 following additional duties:
- 6 a. Preparing a written agenda for the meeting;
- 7 b. Either before or at the beginning of the meeting, setting anticipated time
- 8 frames for either the individual items on the agenda or the whole meeting;
- 9 and
- 10 c. Arranging for someone to arrive in advance of the meeting to insure proper
- 11 set-up and availability of the meeting space.
- 12 5. Every effort shall be made to hold the meeting as scheduled. In the event that
- 13 a meeting needs to be canceled or postponed, the person in charge of the
- 14 meeting shall be responsible for the following actions:
- 15 a. Arranging for the notification of all individuals known to have expressed
- 16 interest in the meeting as well as to the congregation as a whole;
- 17 b. Notifying the parties previously contracted to schedule the meeting space
- 18 of the cancellation or postponement;
- 19 c. Advising the Church Administrative Assistant of the cancellation or
- 20 postponement; and
- 21 d. Rescheduling the meeting for a future time sufficient to allow all interested
- 22 parties to be advised and all arrangements to be repeated as listed herein.

23 **ARTICLE V: THE CHURCH TREASURY**

24 **A. Personnel**

- 25 1. The Board of Directors may appoint a bookkeeper.
- 26 2. It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors to insure that accurate job
- 27 descriptions for all personnel are a part of the By Laws of All Saints
- 28 Metropolitan Community Church.

29 **B. Church Accounts**

- 30 1. Signers on all church accounts shall consist of the current Board of
- 31 Directors.
- 32 2. All account drafts or checks shall require the signature of two (2) or more
- 33 Board Members. No one who writes a check may sign it.
- 34 3. Updated signature cards for all accounts shall be executed within thirty (30)
- 35 days of a change in the Board of Directors.
- 36 4. If a check of draft is made payable to a Board Member, then that Board
- 37 member shall not be a signer on a check or draft made payable to them.
- 38 5. The Treasurer shall not receive the monthly statements for any Church
- 39 Accounts. The monthly statements shall be reconciled by a Treasurer's
- 40 Assistant. This reconciliation shall include the verification of the account
- 41 balances listed on the monthly Treasurer's Report.
- 42
- 43
- 44
- 45
- 46

ARTICLE V: Paragraph B - Section 5 - continued:

6. The Treasurer shall have the authority to transfer up to \$2,000.00 per month between the checking account and the account used for savings without consulting with the Board of Directors. Any amount over this ceiling must be approved in advance by the Board.
7. THE BUILDING FUND
 - a. Spending of funds will require the approval of the congregation.
 - b. Transfer of these funds to a different investment program shall require the approval of the Board of Directors.
 - c. Deposits (whether budgeted amounts or designated contributions) shall be done within seven (7) days of reaching the minimum amount required.
8. Tithes and assessments on interest earned on all funds, with the exception of those funds exempted by the Fellowship By-Laws, shall be paid at the end of the fiscal year.

C. OFFERINGS AND OTHER RECEIPTS

1. Any two individuals from the following list shall serve to count offerings and miscellaneous receipts: board members, Treasurer's Assistants, and Assistant Treasurer.
2. Cash offerings or miscellaneous cash receipts shall not be used to cash personal checks.
3. Checks or other receipts will not be held back from deposit. If the giver does not have sufficient funds to cover the check then *the giver* should hold the check until the funds are sufficient. Post dated checks will not be accepted.
4. Miscellaneous receipts and designated contributions that are given to an individual, as opposed to being placed in the offering plate, shall be given to the counters to be included in the deposit. If these receipts are received on a non-service day, then they shall be turned in at the following service.
5. The counters shall count and verify all receipts. All receipts shall be itemized on the receipt log. All counters shall sign and/or initial the receipt log.
6. All receipts shall be deposited within three (3) days of the service or function at which the funds were received, unless the total amount is \$50.00 or less, in which case, it shall be included with the next deposit.

D. DISBURSEMENTS

1. All debts and obligations shall be paid in a timely manner according to vendor terms, lease agreements, or any other agreements concerning payments. In the event that there is a shortage of funds to cover current obligations then the following listing will govern the priority of payments made:
 - a. Fellowship Tithes
 - b. District Assessments
 - c. Salaries and wages
 - d. Rent, lease, or mortgage payments
 - e. Utilities
 - f. Insurance

1 D. DISBURSEMENTS - Paragraph 1. - continued:

- 2 g. Reimbursements to individuals
- 3 h. All other obligations
- 4 2. Committee chairpersons, team leaders, program coordinators, or the
- 5 Senior Pastor may authorize expenditures within budgeted line items for
- 6 which they are responsible. Expenditures shall not exceed the cumulative
- 7 budget line item unless the Board approves the expenditure in advance.
- 8 3. Expenditures for items that are not included in the budget shall require
- 9 prior Board approval. Funds that are collected and disbursed (in and out
- 10 of the checking account) shall be an exception to this policy. The
- 11 Treasurer must approve any exceptions.
- 12 4. The Treasurer shall have the discretion to withhold payment for
- 13 questionable expenditures, pending investigation of the expenditure.
- 14 5. Once a check or draft is written for a specific amount, it shall not be
- 15 altered in any way. If changes are necessary, the check or draft will be
- 16 voided and a new one issued.
- 17 6. All disbursements will be made by check. Under no circumstances will
- 18 expenditures be made in cash.
- 19 7. Request for Disbursements
- 20 a. A check request form must be completed by the individual that has the
- 21 responsibility to authorize expenditures of the budget line item being
- 22 charged. The check request must include the budget line item being
- 23 charged, the amount of the purchase, and the signature of the
- 24 individual making the request.
- 25 b. Individuals requesting a check should verbally notify the Treasurer by
- 26 Saturday evening of the amount and purpose of the disbursement,
- 27 Checks will be disbursed on Sunday. The completed check form shall
- 28 be submitted on Sunday. If the time periods in this policy are not
- 29 followed, the reimbursement may not be made until the following
- 30 Sunday.
- 31 c. Any receipts, packing slips, invoices, or other documents received shall
- 32 be submitted with the check request on the Sunday following the
- 33 expenditure. In the event an advance of funds from a budget line item
- 34 is made, the individual responsible for the line item is required to make
- 35 a full disclosure of how the funds were used and provide receipts of
- 36 same within 14 days of disbursement.
- 37 d. Receipts should not store name, date of purchase, items purchased and
- 38 amounts clearly marked. Items purchased for personal use should not
- 39 be on the same receipt as items for reimbursement.
- 40 e. Reimbursement requests presented more than thirty (30) days after the
- 41 date of purchase may not be reimbursed.
- 42 8. Charge Accounts
- 43 a. The Treasurer shall be responsible for filling out all applications for
- 44 charge accounts or credit applications.
- 45 b. The church mailing address shall always be the billing address on any
- 46 charge accounts.

1 D. DISBURSEMENTS - Paragraph 8 - continued:

- 2 c. Under no circumstances are personal charges to be charge to a
3 church account.
4 d. Any receipts, packing slips, invoices or other documents received
5 when the charge is made shall be given to the Treasurer the Sunday
6 following the purchase.

7 9. Travel

- 8 a. The Church shall pay for the travel expenses for District and
9 Fellowship Conferences for the Senior Pastor and Lay Delegate(s).
10 b. Housing and transportation expenses shall be reasonable and actual.
11 c. The "per diem" for meals shall be determined by the Board of
12 Directors in advance of the travel.
13 d. All mileage reimbursements must be related to church business or
14 activities performed in a ministerial role and will be reimbursed at the
15 current Internal Revenue Service allowable amount.

16 10. Annual Audit of the Church Treasury

- 17 a. An audit of the Treasury shall be performed at least once each fiscal
18 year, and shall be started within thirty (30) days of the close of the
19 fiscal year.
20 b. The audit shall be performed by a Certified Public Accountant that
21 shall not have any other affiliation with All Saints Metropolitan
22 Community Church.
23 c. The firm or individual completing the audit shall be contracted by the
24 Board of Directors. The contract shall specify when the audit report
25 is due.

26 11. Fund Raising

- 27 a. The Finance Committee is responsible for reviewing and coordinating
28 all fund raising for the Church. Any fund raising proposals must be
29 presented to the Finance Committee in writing and must include date,
30 time, place, event, and purpose. The Finance Committee will then
31 decide whether to recommend the proposal to the Board of Directors
32 for approval.
33 b. Fund raising will be used to raise money for specific, designated
34 purposes. **It will not be used to meet general budget obligations**
35 **or the general fund.**
36 c. Fellowship tithes and District assessments shall be paid from the
37 funds raised, except those funds which are exempted by Fellowship
38 By-Laws

39 12. Designated Funds

- 40 a. Designated funds shall be used to fund select projects that are not in
41 the church budget.
42 b. The establishment of designated funds should be recommended by
43 the Finance Committee and approved by the Board of Directors.
44 c. The following criteria should be considered by the Finance
45 Committee in the establishment of designated funds:
46 (1) What is the purpose of the fund?

1 12. Designated Funds - continued

2 (2) What is the dollar amount that will be raised?

3 (3) How will the funds be raised?

4 d. Fellowship tithes and District assessments shall be paid on
5 contributions given to the designated fund.

6 e. Interest on \$1,000.00 or more held in a designated fund for at least
7 Two (2) months shall go into the designated fund. Interest shall be
8 calculated at the end of the fiscal year or at the dissolution of the
9 fund.

10 f. Full accounting of all designated funds shall be part of the
11 Treasurer's Report.

12 13. Gifts

13 Fellowship tithes and District assessments shall be paid on the value of
14 solicited items given to the church, but not on the value of unsolicited
15 items.

16 14. Scholarships

17 a. Will be distributed by decision of the Board

18 b. Will be based on financial need and the desire to participate in an
19 event.

20 c. Requests should be submitted in writing and include amount
21 desired, reason needed, evidence of need, and reason for
22 attendance.

23 15. Training Fees/Service Contracts

24 a. When deemed appropriate and approved by the Board, the church
25 will pay for outside training in specific areas for church members.

26 b. Said members shall be required to sign a contract for services
27 learned in formal training in exchange for tuition.

28 c. Length of service required shall be reasonable in comparison to the
29 amount of tuition paid.

30 d. Should the term of the contract not be fulfilled, the pro-rated
31 tuition for the balance of the term shall be refunded to the church.

32
33 **ARTICLE VI: CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENTS**

34
35 A. All drafts of contracts remain null and void until approved by the Board of Directors and
36 signed by the Clerk of the Board and an official authorized to sign on behalf of the party
37 with whom All Saints MCC wishes to enter into a contractual agreement.

38
39 B. All contractual agreements not expressly mentioned or implied at the most recent
40 congregational meeting requiring expenditures in excess of one-half (½) of the monthly
41 budget shall require the approval of the congregation at a specially called congregational
42 meeting. Expenditures arising from the possible or actual litigation shall be exempted from
43 the above requirement.

44
45 C. Payment to any organization, company or individual not already covered by a contractual
46 agreement with the Church shall require approval by the Board.

1 **ARTICLE VII: CHURCH CORRESPONDENCE**

- 2
- 3 A. The Senior Pastor, Clerk of the Board, or other appropriate person shall respond within one
- 4 week to Church correspondence necessitating an official response.
- 5
- 6 B. Copies of all official correspondence shall be filed and maintained in the Church office.
- 7
- 8 C. A letter or card shall be mailed on behalf of the Church to all visitors.
- 9
- 10 D. The Clerk shall mail a letter on behalf of the Board to all new members.

11

12 **ARTICLE VIII: CHURCH LEADERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS**

13

- 14 A. Members shall not fill more than one elected position in the Church concurrently.
- 15
- 16 B. With the exception of the Senior Pastor, salaried employees of the Church shall not seek a
- 17 concurrent elected position.
- 18

19 **ARTICLE VIII: HOLY UNIONS**

20

- 21 A. A written outline of a counseling program for Holy Unions shall be maintained by the Senior
- 22 Pastor.
- 23
- 24 B. Members shall not be charged for a Holy Union; non-members shall be charged \$100.00 in
- 25 advance for the Senior Pastor's services in advance of the ceremony.
- 26
- 27 C. Members and non-members wishing to use the Church Sanctuary or chapel shall be assessed
- 28 the full amount of rental fees in advance of the ceremony.
- 29

30 **ARTICLE IX; FUNERAL /MEMORIAL SERVICES AND CONDOLENCES**

31

- 32 A. Family or friends of the deceased members wishing to use the church sanctuary may do so at
- 33 no charge. Appropriate measures should be taken to insure the availability of the sanctuary
- 34 or chapel at the time and date desired.
- 35
- 36 B. A memorial gift of a cost not to exceed \$50.00 shall be given at the discretion of the Senior
- 37 Pastor upon the death of active members and friends of the Church, District Committee
- 38 Members, District Pastors, Elders or the spouse, parent, or child of any of the above.
- 39
- 40 C. Travel expenses for the Senior Pastor shall be provided for the funeral of the Fellowship
- 41 Moderator or District Coordinator.
- 42
- 43

ARTICLE X: CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND RECONCILIATION

A. PREAMBLE

At All Saints Metropolitan Community Church, the quality and strength of our interpersonal relationships is vitally important to our ministry together being effective. As in all human relationships, however, conflict will occur from time to time between us. Conflict itself is not negative. It is natural. In fact, conflict can be beneficial when it is used to make necessary changes, to produce gains, and to foster unity and understanding. Conflict becomes negative when it is not dealt with directly, fairly, carefully, and with love and reconciliation. Conflict becomes harmful when it escalates to threats, name calling, expansion from one issue to multiple issues, and movement away from specific complaints to general complaints.

B. SUPPORT COUNCIL

To maximize the potential for conflicts within All Saints MCC to result in beneficial outcomes for the Church and for the parties to any conflict, the Senior Pastor shall appoint a standing Support Council (Council) made up of six (6) appointed members and the Senior Pastor who shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Council. The six (6) appointed members shall be selected from the following groups:

1. Two (2) from the Church Staff.
2. Two (2) from the Church Board of Directors
3. Two (2) from the Congregation at Large.

All members of the Support Council will be required to complete appropriate training as defined by the Senior Pastor in support of this entire Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation Policy and shall serve until replaced by the Senior Pastor.

C. POLICY

All Saints MCC believe that conflict can best be resolved by the parties involved meeting promptly to identify and discuss the conflict with each other, ideally within 24-hours of the conflict having arisen, without outside intervention or assistance. All Saints MCC also believes, however, that unresolved conflict between individuals becomes conflict within the church as a whole, causing disruptions and divisiveness and, thereby, interfering with the Church's ability to fulfill its mission effectively. Therefore, if the parties to the conflict have not met within 24 hours after Church leadership learns of the conflict, the following process and timetable will be followed by the Church:

1. The Church leader who receives the initial notification of the conflict from one or more of the parties involved will:
 - a. Contact the parties involved to encourage them to meet and diligently pursue resolution without intervention within the next 24 hours.
 - b. Notify one other Church leader, who is a member of the Council, of the conflict and identify the parties involved.

ARTICLE X - CONFLICT RESOLUTION - continued

2. After the expiration of this additional 24 hour “grace period”, if the conflict has not been resolved, these two Church leaders will schedule a meeting with all known parties to the conflict to occur within the next 48 hours.
3. If this meeting does not result in a resolution acceptable to all parties, these two church leaders will immediately notify the Senior Pastor.
4. Within 48 hours of receiving notification of the conflict, the Senior Pastor will schedule a meeting of the Council with the parties involved.
5. Each of the parties to the conflict will have the right to strike one appointed member within 24 hours of being notified by the Senior Pastor of the scheduled meeting of the Council. Should there be more than two (2) parties to the conflict and the number of appointed members stricken by the parties results in fewer than four (4) appointed member remaining on the council, the Senior Pastor may appoint another member from the appropriate group to replace any members(s) that may be stricken to bring the total number of appointed members to a minimum of four (4) and a maximum of (6) and will immediately notify the parties to the conflict of the final make-up of the Council.
6. In support of each of the parties to the conflict, the Council and each of the parties are expected to adhere to the following principles:
 - a. Each must affirm their relationship with God and commit to finding acceptable solutions that exemplify God’s grace and God’s will.
 - b. Concern for the mutual benefit and support for all parties and of All Saints MCC as a whole.
 - c. Be firm on your interest, however, be flexible on solutions to the conflict.
 - d. At all times, speak to each person’s self-esteem and worth as a human being.
 - e. Name calling and abusive language will not be used by any of the parties (don’t use labels - do use facts).
 - f. Rumors and innuendo should not be used, nor should “fogging”. Stick to the facts.
 - g. Do not interrupt! The person who has the floor, has the floor.
 - h. Identify and eliminate false conflicts. Misunderstandings are not true conflicts.
 - i. Analyze the interests of all of the parties involved.
 - j. Talk about the problem first, then the solutions.
 - k. Strive to reveal the interests of all parties involved. Remember, a person’s interests are the focal point of the conflict.

C. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTIES

Each of the parties to the conflict will:

1. Be given equal time to present the problem and interests. Each must use the word “I”, not “You”. (i.e. “Here is how I feel...” not “Here is how you make me feel.”)
2. Acknowledge that you hear the other person’s problem with eye contact, not by interrupting.

C. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTIES - continued

3. Ask clarifying questions. You are trying to find solutions that all parties can agree to. Ask a lot of questions, brainstorm possible answers first., pick from them afterwards.
4. Stick to the topic at hand, Issues or interests not related to the stated problem (fogging) will not be permitted.
5. Look for areas of agreement.
6. Refrain from escalating the discussion. If the discussion should escalate, the discussion will be temporarily stopped until calm can be restored.
7. Utilize mutual restating. If anyone says "You don't understand", the discussion will be stopped and the state will be repeated. The first party will be given an opportunity to correct you and you will be given an opportunity to restate again, etc.
8. State all requests for change in behavioral terms. It will not be allowable to ask for an attitude change. If you want a person to stop doing something, you must tell them what to do instead.
9. Watch their body language, Be consistent with verbal and non-verbal messages. A person's body language will be believed and remembered over their words.
10. Sit either on the same side of the table or in chairs at a 45 degree angle. Nothing should physically separate the parties involved.
11. Agree that everything that is said and all actions that are taken within the Council will remain strictly confidential.
12. Agree the only solutions that will work are solutions that all parties come up with together and accept individually.

ARTICLE XI: AMENDMENTS TO THE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

These Standard Operating Procedures shall be amended upon approval by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Board of Directors at any monthly Board meeting at which a motion for amendments is made.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND RECONCILIATION

A Policy of All Saints Metropolitan Community Church

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- Agree the only solutions that will work are the solutions that all parties come up with together and accept individually.

SUPPORT COUNCIL PRESENTATION

Dear congregant, we have found it helpful when the Support Council is asked to participate in conflict resolution to ask those presenting their concerns do so in the three areas designated below. Please take a few moments to organize your thoughts related to your concerns into these. You may choose to write them in the space provided. This form will not be turned in to the council but they may use a similar copy for making notes and organizing themselves for conducting the session. The FOCUS is the event, experience, or area of conflict. I FEEL are statements of your response to the focus. BECAUSE is why you feel that way. I NEED is what you need from the other party or the circumstance to make reconciliation and for future well being.

FOCUS: _____

I FEEL . . .

BECAUSE . . .

I NEED . . .

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

On 10/10/68, the Board of Directors of the [redacted] Company, Inc. held a meeting at the [redacted] Hotel, New York, New York. The meeting was held at 10:00 A.M. and lasted for approximately two hours. The following items were discussed and decided upon:

1. The Board of Directors approved the [redacted] report of the [redacted] Committee on [redacted] for the period of [redacted] 1968.
2. The Board of Directors approved the [redacted] report of the [redacted] Committee on [redacted] for the period of [redacted] 1968.
3. The Board of Directors approved the [redacted] report of the [redacted] Committee on [redacted] for the period of [redacted] 1968.
4. The Board of Directors approved the [redacted] report of the [redacted] Committee on [redacted] for the period of [redacted] 1968.
5. The Board of Directors approved the [redacted] report of the [redacted] Committee on [redacted] for the period of [redacted] 1968.

Respectfully,
[redacted]

Very truly yours,
[redacted]

Very truly yours,
[redacted]

Very truly yours,
[redacted]